

THE INTENTION
OF
MATTHEW 23

SUPPLEMENTS TO NOVUM TESTAMENTUM

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THE INTENTION OF MATTHEW 23

BY

DAVID E. GARLAND



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To
Frank Stagg

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PREFACE

The material in this book was presented as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, while I was a student and instructor in New Testament Greek, and was accepted in 1976. It appears here in substantially the same form with some alterations.

I should like to thank the many people who made the completion of this study possible. Grateful acknowledgement is accorded the Committee of Instruction with Professor Frank Stagg as supervisor. Others who served on my committee were Professor George R. Beasley-Murray, who provided the initial encouragement for this project, Professor William E. Hull, Professor Peter Rhea Jones, Professor Harold S. Songer, and Professor Wayne Ward.

Others have assisted in the preparation of this work. My greatest appreciation goes to my wife, Diana, who, despite working full time as a marriage counselor and struggling with her own Ph.D. program, was still able to find time to type flawlessly many rough drafts and to find emotional energy to encourage. Dr. Billy Storms typed patiently the final draft and Mrs. Jan McDowell typed the revisions of the dissertation. The writer must also express a deep appreciation for the love and support of the members of Immanuel Baptist Church, Shepherdsville, Kentucky, whose ministry and fellowship he had been privileged to share for over three years as their pastor.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Louisville, Kentucky
April, 1978

David E. Garland

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AJT</i>	<i>American Journal of Theology</i>
<i>ASTI</i>	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Insititute</i>
<i>ATR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
<i>BBC</i>	<i>The Broadman Bible Commentary</i> , ed. by Clifton J. Allen
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibThBull</i>	<i>Biblical Theological Bulletin</i>
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>The Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>ET</i>	<i>The Expository Times</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>IB</i>	<i>Interpreter's Bible</i> , ed. by George A. Buttrick
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBC</i>	<i>The Jerome Biblical Commentary</i> , ed. by Raymond E. Brown
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RechSR</i>	<i>Recherches de Science Religieuse</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>StEv</i>	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , ed. by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. by George W. Bromiley
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TU</i>	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The twenty-third chapter of Matthew poses a delicate problem for interpreters. Its unremitting acrimony seems out of character for Jesus and seems to stand in stark contrast to the command to love one's neighbor in 22:38, which immediately precedes chap. 23, and the command to love one's enemies in 5:43-48. As a consequence, Montefiore characterized this chapter as the most "unchristian" in all the gospels and expressed the hope that little could be traceable to Jesus.¹ Bernard Bamberger, another Jewish scholar, raised a concomitant issue more bluntly: "the picture of Pharisaism here is biased, unfair and even libelous".² Jewish scholars are particularly irked when they encounter exculpatory statements such as McNeile's comment on Matthew 23:17. Jesus addressed the scribes and Pharisees as $\mu\omega\rho\alpha\iota$, an offence tantamount to murder and worthy of hell fire according to Matthew 5:22; and McNeile concluded: "It shows that not the word but the spirit in which it is uttered is what matters".³

Montefiore acidly responded: "If R. Akiba had said what we find in 5:22, and if he had called his Christian contemporaries 'fools', I wonder if a similar excuse for him would have been suggested by the same commentator!".⁴ Perhaps one might conclude from 23:37 that the spirit of Jesus in Matthew 23 was redemptive in intention, but the expressions hypocrites, sons of hell, blind guides, sons of murderers guilty of righteous blood, brood of vipers, who *would not* repent and who will not likely escape the judgment of Gehenna,

¹ C. G. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels: Edited with an Introduction and a Commentary*, I:296. H. Benedict Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 187, wrote more recently: "...the extreme bitterness of this chapter is out of character with what we can recover of the historical Jesus...". Cf. also B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*, p. 253.

² Bernard J. Bamberger, *Proselytism in the Talmudic Period*, p. 272.

³ Alan Hugh McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 334.

⁴ Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, I:301.

all punctuated by Jesus' abandonment of the temple in 24:1, would seem to militate against this conclusion.⁵

Further pique has been expressed by Samuel Sandmel. He criticized Strack-Billerbeck as a vestige of the polemical study of Jewish backgrounds⁶ and particularly noted their discussion of Matthew 5:43-48. Although few parallels could be found in Rabbinic literature to substantiate the statement in 5:43, Sandmel claimed that Strack-Billerbeck left the impression that Judaism taught the hatred of enemies almost as a central doctrine. Sandmel remarked further :

S.-B. carefully omit such gospel passages as Matt. 23, which to any fair minded reader, such as a man from Mars, would prevent the characterization of the gospels as expressive of love and only love. Christianity shared with other versions of Judaism both the ideal of the love of one's fellow men and also a hostility to the outgroup.⁷

One of the central issues for interpreting Matthew 23 thus emerges: 1) either Jesus was inconsistent with his own teaching and patently unjust in his implication that *all* rabbis were hypocritical sons of snakes; or 2) Jesus addressed only a contumacious minority, and the presumed misrepresentation of the scribes and Pharisees must be attributed either to careless reporting or to intentional alteration in the traditioning process; or 3) Jesus did not utter this discourse as it stands and chap. 23 is the creation of the compiler of Q and Matthew, the editor, who heightened the acerbity.⁸

Most scholars have relieved Jesus of any culpability by ascribing the virulence of the discourse to either an early Jewish Christian community or to Matthew's community. W. D. Davies, for example, contended :

... the sources we possess for the ministry of Jesus emerge from a period when the Church and the Synagogue were increasingly diverging, so that many aspects of the relations between Jesus and the Pharisees and Scribes

⁵ David Flusser, "Two Anti-Jewish Montages in Matthew", *Immanuel*, V:37-45, 1975, argued that only in Matthew, of the Synoptic Gospels, can genuine anti-Jewish passages be found even though Matthew is often the most Jewish of the Gospels. He used the terms "distorted" and "manipulated" and described Matthew's redaction as representative of "vulgar anti-Judaism ... of the early Gentile Church".

⁶ Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania", *JBL*, LXXXI:10, 1962.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Cf. C. G. Montefiore, *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings*, p. 322; and H. J. Flowers, "Matthew xxiii.15", *ET*, LXXIII:67-68, 1961.

have either been hidden from us by silence or misinterpreted by partial and manipulated information.⁹

The basic assumption has been that the explanation for the polemical cast of chap. 23 can only be understood when the historical situation of Matthew is understood.¹⁰ However, the historical situation of Matthew remains a highly controvertible issue.¹¹ For instance, Stendahl concluded from the peculiar opposition to the scribes and Pharisees that they are "the representatives of the synagogue 'across the street' in Matthew's community".¹² Gaston recently responded that if the Pharisees in this Gospel were the representatives of the rival synagogue, the astonishing ignorance of Matthew about Pharisees indicated there was no intercourse between the two. Instead, he claimed that the Pharisees were for Matthew a theological construct.¹³

A preconceived *Sitz im Leben* for Matthew does not seem to be particularly helpful in interpreting Matthew 23. Although it may provide a justification for the vitriolic nature of the address, it fails to account for the apparent contradictions in 23:2-3 and 23:23. These verses are particularly puzzling in light of the redactional material in 15:1-20 in which Jesus rejects "the tradition" of the scribes and Pharisees (cf. 19:3-9), and in 16:5-12 where Matthew warns against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which is specifically identified in v. 12 as their teaching and not their bread. Verses 2-3 also do not coincide with Jesus' attitude toward the oral tradition elsewhere (cf. Mk. 2:23ff., 7:1ff.), nor does it seem likely

⁹ W. D. Davies, "Matthew 5:17, 18", *Christian Origins and Judaism*, p. 47. In connection with this, Davies contended in *The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 90, that Matthew can be seen in its true perspective only against the Judaism of Jamnia. Cf. *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, pp. 256-315.

¹⁰ Cf. Werner Georg Kümmel, "Die Weherufe über die Schriftgelehrten und Pharisäer (Matthäus 23, 13-36)", *Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament?*, pp. 139-140. Ernst Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", *ZTK*, XLVIII:38-39, 1951, maintained that a proper understanding of chap. 23 required an investigation of the original *Sitz im Leben* of the individual units which make up the whole.

¹¹ There is a radical contradiction in the various views represented basically by Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", pp. 43f.; Wolfgang Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel. Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums*, p. 79; Reinhart Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium*, pp. 32 and 89; and Sijef van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew*, pp. 171-172.

¹² Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, p. xi.

¹³ Lloyd Gaston, "The Messiah of Israel as Teacher of the Gentiles", *Int.* XXIX:34, 1975. Cf. also Georg Strecker, "The Concept of History in Matthew", *JAAR*, XXXV:225, 1967; Rolf Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium*, pp. 17-23; and van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 29.

that Matthew would have acquiesced to the ordained authority of the arch villains of his Gospel. Why were these concessions included in what is supposedly a polemical discourse? It seems that to obtain an answer one must first interpret Matthew 23 within the context of Matthew and allow it to inform the understanding of the *Sitz im Leben* rather than vice versa.

Finally, if it were the fierce rivalry between the community of Christians and the community of Jews led by the Pharisees which gave impetus to the extreme antagonism found in this discourse, then it seems a legitimate question to ask whether or not Matthew was "downright dishonest".¹⁴ Gaston recently concluded that "Matthew taught the church to hate Israel", and the redactor Matthew "can no longer be part of the personal canon of many".¹⁵ Luther's principle, "*urgemus Christum contra scripturam*", was also invoked by Kümmel, who claimed that the zealous polemic in Matthew 23 distorted both the reality and the spirit of Jesus.¹⁶ This is a matter that deserves serious consideration.

METHODOLOGY AND PURPOSE

Three phases have been recognized in the formation of the gospels: the origin and growth of the materials themselves (*Formgeschichte*), the formation of unities according to similarities in form, subject matter, key words (*Traditionsgeschichte*), and the actual composition of the gospel (*Redaktionsgeschichte*). With the advent of form criticism, gospel research largely concentrated on refining the authentic sayings of the historical Jesus from the crude ore of the primitive tradition. It was commonly assumed that this tradition was incorporated into a gospel through some agglomerative process. However, one of the major contributions of redaction criticism was its emphasis that the one(s) responsible for the final form of the gospel was not simply a stenographer, or, a la Dibelius, a collector and vehicle of tradition; he was intelligent. Redaction criticism, therefore, focused on the third phase of the gathering of materials by recognizing that the evangelist used his intelligence to plan and compose his gospel around his own distinctive theological viewpoint and the exigencies of his own historical

¹⁴ This is the term used by C. F. D. Moule, "The Techniques of New Testament Research", *Jesus and Man's Hope*, II:37.

¹⁵ Gaston, "Jesus as Teacher", p. 40.

¹⁶ Kümmel, "Weherufe", pp. 146-147.

situation. It was recognized that the evangelist not only passed on primitive tradition, he also reinterpreted it.¹⁷

Most redaction critics adopted a "horizontal methodology" (a term coined by William G. Thompson)¹⁸ in order to identify the redactional material. To understand the theology of Matthew and Luke, it was considered necessary to distinguish their differences from Mark and Q and to separate tradition from redaction. The pitfalls of this methodology have become obvious.¹⁹ (1) How is one able to identify the author's hand with certainty? Divergence may simply be attributable to different traditions received by Matthew and Luke, or to different texts of Mark. (2) If it is assumed that the editor is handling written sources, how is one to trace with certainty the outlines of these shadowy sources which lurk behind the text? (3) The inter-relationship of the synoptic gospels still looms as an unsolved, and perhaps unsolvable problem; but if the Two Source hypothesis were disproven, many a redactional appletart would be upset. (4) There is also a problem in isolating material peculiar to a gospel and deriving from that material the evangelist's theology. This may lead to a distorted picture, for as Krister Stendahl pointed out in his review of E. P. Blair's *Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew*: "There is even no way of knowing if the center and the traits most important to Matthew are not the most common to two or three or four evangelists".²⁰ (5) Finally, if the evangelist not only passed on tradition, but also reinterpreted it, it follows that the gospel material is not necessarily *either* traditional *or* redactional; it may be *both* traditional *and* redactional. Therefore, the attempt to separate tradition from redaction may not always shed light on the evangelist's theology or his intentions. Results from the use of a horizontal methodology are at best only tentative, although it remains an invaluable "tool" for research.

Redaction critics have recognized that the evangelists wrote for a definite purpose and gave their works a definite structure, but this

¹⁷ William G. Thompson, "Reflections on the Composition of MT 8:1-9:34", *CBQ*, XXXIII:365, 1971. Cf. also his review of Joachim Rohde, *Die redaktionsgeschichtliche Methode. Einführung und kritische Sichtung des Forschungsstandes*, Bib, L:136-139, 1970.

¹⁸ William G. Thompson, *Matthew's Advice to a Divided Community*, pp. 7ff.

¹⁹ Cf. Morna Hooker, "In his own Image?". *What About the New Testament? Essays in Honour of Christopher Evans*, pp. 28-44.

²⁰ Krister Stendahl, "The First Gospel and the Authority of Jesus: Review of Edward P. Blair's *Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew*", *Int*, XVI:461, 1962.

insight has not always been utilized in the interpretation of individual passages. Norman Perrin wrote:

If the evangelists are authors they must be studied as authors, and they must be studied as other authors are studied. In connection with the SGA [Synoptic Gospels and Acts] "literary criticism" has normally meant the consideration of sources and literary relationships, but we are going to have to widen our concern to cover every aspect of the work of the evangelists as authors.²¹

However, composition and structure as keys to interpretation have been largely neglected. Again Perrin stated:

This comparative neglect of composition and structure is the more surprising in light of the obvious fact that an ancient author simply did not have the modern method of giving a structure to his work by means of a table of contents, chapter divisions, heading, etc. The indications of the intended structure had therefore to be internal, presented within the text itself ... It follows, therefore, that no interpretation of any pericope within, or section of, these works can be adequate which does not raise questions about the place and function of that pericope or section within the structure of the work as a whole.²²

This insight should particularly be borne in mind in an analysis of Matthew because of the meticulous concern for composition and structure evident in this gospel. It is a concern so prominent that Davies has described it as "an architectonic grandeur... Its different parts are inseparable like those of a well planned and well built house".²³ At this point, the present writer believes that what Thompson has called a "vertical analysis" is imperative for interpretation.²⁴ This involves working through the text as it stands without reference to questions of source or form criticism, interpreting each term and phrase with reference to its usage elsewhere in Matthew, and considering the logic of the pericope or unit in its own right and its own context. In his review of Joachim Rohde, Thompson stated that the evangelist

²¹ Norman Perrin, "The Evangelist as Author: Reflections on Method in the Study and Interpretation of the Synoptic Gospels and Acts", *BR*, XVII:10, 1972.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16. This has been correctly perceived by Benno Przybylski, "The Role of Mt. 3:13-4:11 in the Structure and Theology of the Gospel of Matthew", *BibThBull*, IV:223, 1974: "Since the redactors of the gospels such as Matthew took over much traditional material, their own points of view may not be as easily discernible from individual pericopae as from the way these pericopae are placed into a larger framework. This does not deny the fact that the redactors made significant changes in individual texts. It only indicates that the redactional motifs... may be more significant than those which are based on isolated texts".

²³ Davies, *Setting*, p. 14.

²⁴ Thompson, *Advice*, p. 12.

depended upon earlier tradition but his reinterpretation and understanding of that tradition “will ultimately emerge from a study of individual pericopes in their own composition and in relation to their surrounding context and the gospel as a whole”.²⁵

The purpose of this study will be to delve into Matthew’s intention in chap. 23 as it is revealed in: 1) the composition of its various parts into a montage; 2) the Matthean alterations within the chapter as discerned from a comparison with Mark and Luke; and 3) its place in the structure of the gospel. The central question will be: What really occupies the mind of the author as he passes on and subsequently transforms the tradition — a tradition he did not invent nor imagine but was striving to preserve — in light of his own theological perspective?

²⁵ Thompson, “Review”, p. 138. Cf. Quentin Quesnell, *The Mind of Mark: Interpretation and Method through the Exegesis of Mark 6:52*, pp. 44-46; and Karl Paul Donfried, “The Allegory of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) as a Summary of Matthean Theology”, *JBL*, XCIII:415-428, 1974.

CHAPTER ONE

THE COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF MATTHEW 23

When compared to its scattered parallels, Mark 12:37b-40 (Luke 20:45-47), and Luke 11:37-52, 13:34-35, Matthew 23 materializes as a complex literary piece composed of disparate parts that are interlaced together in much the same manner as Matthew 5-7.¹ The comparison of synoptic parallels prompts the elusive question about sources. What sources did Matthew have in hand, and how did he proceed in the composition of this discourse? This allows no easy solution. The waters of synoptic relationships have been recently muddled (or cleared up, depending on one's perspective) by the stirrings of those who would submit old presuppositions to new scrutiny. New alternatives have been proposed; and the result is, though they do not all agree, more and more scholars are finding it impossible to accept the rather simplistic approach that the traditional Two-Source Theory involves.² A horizontal comparison of Matthew 23 with its parallels would seem to magnify the contingency of this theory. The upshot is that if this theory is to be assumed in studying Matthew 23 some reasons must be provided to justify it. This chapter will attempt to determine briefly the sources which Matthew utilized, to outline the general indications that Matthew 23 is a composition of Matthew, and to delineate the context of the passage in the framework of chaps. 21-25.

¹ Pierre Bonnard, *L'Evangile selon Saint Matthieu*, p. 333.

² Cf. the bibliographical essay by Reginald H. Fuller, Thomas R. W. Longstaff, and E. P. Sanders, "Synoptic Problem; After Ten Years", *Perkins Journal*, XXVIII: 63-74, 1975; and see the summaries of the recent resurgence in the study of the synoptic problem by Leopold Sabourin, "Recent Gospel Studies", *BibThBull*, III:283-315, 1973; George B. Caird, "The Study of the Gospels: I. Source Criticism", *ET*, LXXXVII:99-104, 1976; and Ronald D. Worden, "Redaction Criticism of Q: A Survey", *JBL*, XCIV:532-546, 1975. Sabourin summed things up: "The value of Q as a document is just as problematic as its necessity, and there is no general agreement on its contents". John P. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew's Gospel: A Redactional Study of Mt. 5:17-48*, p. 6, stated that while the Two-Source theory cannot claim "absolute certitude" it does enjoy "practical viability".

THE SYNOPTIC PARALLELS

The first step in determining what sources Matthew may have had in hand is to compare Matthew 23:1-39 with its synoptic parallels. This cannot be simply done and necessitates a survey of the various problems which inhere in a horizontal comparison of the gospels.

An Outline of the Source Critical Problems

It has so often been assumed that Matthew used Mark that it has become almost axiomatic. However, Matthew diverges considerably from Mark at this point. Matthew also substantially diverges from Luke and the assumption that both evangelists used a common source, Q, must be carefully re-examined.

Matthew's disagreements with Mark. There is little in Matthew 23 that agrees with Mark 12 except its position in the sequence of the gospel narrative. Matthew 23 is situated after the controversies that conclude with the pericope about David's son (Mk. 12:35-37a = Mt. 22:41-46) and preceding the apocalyptic discourse (Mk. 13 = Mt. 24). The only linguistic concurrence of chap. 23 with Mark (who does not include any series of woes) occurs in vv. 6-7a = Mark 12:38b-39. However, Mark refers to the ostentation of the scribes who desire to walk about in long robes (στολαί), while Matthew refers to scribes and Pharisees who make their phylacteries broad and lengthen their fringes (κράσπεδα). According to Mark, the scribes are solicitous of: a) greetings in the market place, b) chief seats in the synagogues, and c) places of honor at feasts. In Matthew the order is reversed; they love: a) places of honor at feasts, b) chief seats in the synagogue, and c) greetings in the market place. The fact that Luke, in 20:45-47, parallels Mark 12:37b-40 nearly verbatim in the same context and that he knows a parallel to Matthew 23:6-7a as a woe in an altogether different context (Lk. 11:43) poses another problem concerning Matthew's use of Mark which requires an explanation.

Matthew's disagreements with Luke. The difference between the Matthean and Lucan woes is also striking. The settings of the two discourses are entirely different. In Luke 11:37, Jesus is dining at the home of a Pharisee and commits the faux pas of failing to wash ritually before eating. The Pharisee's startled reaction provides an opportunity for Jesus' remarks on external and internal purity which are then followed by the woes. The series of woes ends in vv. 53-54

with the Pharisees angry, only biding their time for the right moment to ensnare Jesus. In contrast, the discourse in Matthew 23 conforms more closely to the setting of Mark 12:37. It is specifically addressed to the disciples and crowds in the temple, and it serves as the climax for the series of controversies with the Jewish authorities which began in Matthew 21. It concludes with a lament over Jerusalem (vv. 37-39) which is found in Luke 13:34-35 in such a different context that it gives the saying an altogether different meaning. In Matthew this saying, announcing that "your house is forsaken", precedes the eschatological discourse in chap. 24 which begins by recording that Jesus immediately left the Temple.

Not only do the settings of the woes conflict in the two gospels, there is also a fundamental difference in structure. Matthew 23:13ff. consists of a sevenfold woe against both the scribes and Pharisees; Luke 11:42ff. is composed of only six woes, three against the Pharisees, and three against the lawyers (νομικοί). Two woes in Matthew (23:15; 16-22) have no corresponding parallels in Luke, while two woes in Luke have Matthean parallels which are not woes (Lk. 11:43 = Mt. 23:6-7a; Lk. 11:46 = Mt. 23:4). Also, one of the woes in Matthew is included by Luke, but not as a woe (Mt. 23:25-26 = Lk. 11:39-41). This suggests that both Luke and Matthew composed woes from sayings which were not originally woes in the tradition,³ or that they changed some woes in the tradition into simple declarative sentences, or that they have used completely different sources. None of these possibilities is mutually exclusive.

In favor of the latter, however, is the fact that no two woes in Luke follow the same sequence as in Matthew, and vice versa:⁴

Matthew	Luke
1st 23:13 (shutting the kingdom)	6th 11:52 (taking the key of knowledge)
2nd 23:15 (proselytes)	absent
3rd 23:16-22 (oaths)	absent
4th 23:23-24 (tithes)	1st 11:42

³ Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, pp. 113-114.

⁴ Cf. also the various analyses of W. C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, p. 243; Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, p. 313; Alan Hugh McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 329; T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, pp. 95-96; and Ernst Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", *ZTK*, XLVIII:45, 1951.

5th 23:25-26 (purity of vessels)	not a woe 11:39-41
6th 23:27-28 (whitewashed tombs)	3rd 11:44 (unmarked graves)
7th 23:29-32 (tombs of the prophets)	5th 11:47-48
Luke	Matthew
1st 11:42 (tithes)	4th 23:23-24
2nd 11:43 (chief seats in synagogue)	not a woe 23:6-7a
3rd 11:44 (unmarked graves)	6th 23:27-28 (whitewashed tombs)
4th 11:46 (binding heavy burdens)	not a woe 23:4
5th 11:47-48 (tombs of prophets)	7th 23:29-32
6th 11:52 (taking the key of knowledge)	1st 23:13 (shutting the kingdom)

An interesting pattern emerges from this comparison of Matthew and Luke. The order of the woes is not as jumbled as it first appears, or at least, not randomly so. The order of woes in Luke, in comparison with those in Matthew, is sixth, first, third and fifth. In Matthew, in comparison with Luke, the order is fourth, sixth, seventh and first. This indicates a pattern attributable to a common sequence of woes in their source. A possible resolution of the conflicting order will be discussed below.

Besides the variation in the arrangement of the woes, there is also a well above average difference in the wording of those components of Matthew 23 and Luke 11 which appear to agree in substance.⁵ The only certain agreement occurs between Matthew 23:23b and Luke 11:42b in what seems to be an extremely conservative statement that affirms the Pharisees' scrupulous practice in tithing.⁶ In Matthew's first woe, 23:13, the scribes and Pharisees are condemned for shutting the kingdom of heaven; in Luke's version the lawyers are accused of taking the key of knowledge. In Matthew 23:23, the Pharisees tithe mint, anise, and cummin and neglect the weightier matters of the Law: justice, mercy, and faith. Luke has it that they tithe mint, rue, and every herb, and that they pass over justice and love of God. Matthew concludes this woe with the simile about straining a gnat and swallowing a camel (23:24) which is absent in Luke. Matthew's fifth woe and Luke's introduction (11:39-41) also agree to a point. The Pharisees are accused of cleansing the outside of the cup and dish (Matthew, *παροπίς*; Luke, *πίναξ*). According to Matthew's version, the inside is full of extortion and excess; the remedy in 23:26 is that they should first clean the inside, and then the outside

⁵ So B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study in Origins*, p. 253.

⁶ On the textual problem in Lk. 11:42, cf. below, p. 139, n. 64.

would become clean. According to Luke's version, the Pharisees themselves are full of extortion and wickedness; and they need to give alms so that all things might become clean for them.

The woes in Matthew 23:27 and Luke 11:44 diverge even more. Matthew refers to whitewashed tombs which are outwardly beautiful but inwardly full of corruption. Luke refers to unmarked graves that defile those who unsuspectingly come into contact with them. Matthew 23:28 is without parallel and concludes that the scribes and Pharisees appear righteous in men's eyes but are actually full of lawlessness and hypocrisy.

The final woe in Matthew 23:29a maintains that the scribes and Pharisees build the tombs of the prophets. With this much Luke 11:47a agrees. Matthew continues the charge that they adorn the tombs of the righteous, and v. 30 contains a protest of innocence that they would not have shared in their fathers' guilt had they themselves lived in the days of the prophets. Luke simply added that their fathers killed the prophets. Matthew 23:31 states that because of their protest, they bear witness that they are the sons of the prophets; Luke's version argues, however quizzically, that they share in the works of their fathers because the fathers killed and they build. Matthew has rounded off this woe with very harsh statements in 23:32-33: "Fulfill the measure of your fathers!" and "How shall you escape the judgment of Gehenna?" Matthew 23:34-36 and Luke 11:49-51 coincide with only small variations, the most notable of which is whether Jesus is speaking for himself, as in Matthew (I send), or whether he is quoting the Wisdom of God, as in Luke (I will send).

Another striking difference between the two woe discourses is the generous sprinkling of pejorative terms in Matthew ("hypocrites", "blind guides", "fools" [cf. Lk. 11:40, ἄφρονες], "snakes", "offspring of vipers") which are absent in Luke and which considerably spice the tone of Matthew's discourse. From all of these variations it can be surmised that if a common source stands behind Matthew and Luke, one or both evangelists took considerable liberties with it.

Solutions to the Source Critical Problems

Several solutions have been proposed in an attempt to explain the perplexities that have been briefly outlined. Regarding Mark 12:37-39, it has been conjectured that the first evangelist has here abridged the tradition by preserving only a fragment of a larger denunciation, akin to what is found in Matthew 23, because it did

not serve his particular purposes to include any more material.⁷ The best argument in support of this comes from the close parallel between Mark 12:38b-39 and Luke 11:43. The resemblance is noteworthy since Luke repeated much the same material later in 20:45-47 which is exactly parallel to Mark 12:37-40. Either Mark was dependent upon Luke 20:45ff., which is unlikely; or Luke copied Mark 12:38ff. and also preserved an original logion in 11:43 from which Mark had drawn at an earlier stage in the tradition; or Luke 11:43 had been influenced by the Markan form of the saying (for some reason only partially, however, since the order of Mark is reversed and the places of honor at feasts is omitted).

Many have thought that the best alternative is that Mark was acquainted with some form of the larger tradition of which Luke 11:43 was a part. Knox allowed this as a possibility but also offered the objection that it was not easy to see why a Christian writer should have given only a selection on such a theme.⁸ He maintained that there is no evidence that Mark consciously selected materials — that Mark, for example, would choose a small portion of an entire collection of what apparently were woes and modify it into a brief summary. However, in answer to this, Mark did not include extensive teaching of Jesus, but summaries, which is implied in the phrase in 12:38a, καὶ ἐν τῇ διδασκίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἔλεγεν. Knox speculated further that the “growing hostility between church and synagogue led to a multiplication of accusations” which would perhaps explain the extension of and the greater severity of the charges in both Luke and Matthew.⁹ On the other hand, Taylor noted in his comments on the intention of Mark 12:38ff.:

Mark, or a predecessor, desired to show how completely Jesus had broken with the Rabbis. The selection of the sayings reveals the strong anti-Jewish temper of the Church at Rome, for Mark himself indicates that the relationships of Jesus with the scribes were not always hostile (cf. 12:28-34).¹⁰

If this is true, the reason Mark did not include so many accusations as Matthew and Luke cannot be attributed to the greater hostility

⁷ So A. E. J. Rawlinson, *St. Mark*, p. 175; Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 493; and Julius Schniewind, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 223.

⁸ Wilfred L. Knox, *The Sources of the Synoptic Gospels*, I:93-94.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁰ Taylor, *Mark*, p. 494. Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark*, p. 258, stated that Mk. 12:37b-40, “according to Mark’s understanding, proclaims the final cleavage between the Christian church and the teachers of the law”.

between Christians and Jews in the respective eras of Matthew and Luke. Many believe it can be shown that none of the accusations, in Matthew 23 at least, postdate A.D. 70; and most, if not all, derive from the ministry of Jesus or the very earliest Palestinian community.¹¹ The interpretation of the charges may reflect the Sitz im Kirche of Matthew, but the substance of the charges need not stem from current debate with the synagogue across the street. Therefore, it is quite possible that Mark was, in this instance, independently aware of a longer tradition very similar to Q which he abridged; but this does not rule out another possibility that the charges in Mark 12:38-39 and Luke 11:43 survived independently in two different traditions and that Mark and Q overlapped.¹²

To this point, Matthew 23:6-7a has not been considered. Schulz has argued that these verses are closely related to Mark 12:38b-39, but that the divergences justify the supposition that Matthew has read and utilized the saying in Q (= Lk. 11:43).¹³ He presented the following reasons: 1) Luke 11:43 stands in the context of woes which from their Matthean parallels, however varied, indicates that it belongs to what may be called Q. 2) Matthew apparently had Mark before him because of his inclusion of "the places of honor at dinners" which is absent in Luke 11:43, but the order reverses that of Mark 12:38-39 and corresponds to that of Luke 11:43. However, Matthew agrees with Mark against Luke in that vv. 6-7a is not a woe. 3) Both Matthew and Luke include the accusative article with places of honor and chief seats which is absent in Mark. This evidence of similarity with both Mark and Luke suggests that Matthew incorporated a saying from a source common to Luke but accommodated it to the Markan version of the text before him.¹⁴

¹¹ For example, cf. B. C. Lategan, "Die Botsing tussen Jesus en die Fariseërs volgens Matt. 23", [The conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees according to Mt. 23] *Nederduits Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif*, X:217-230, 1969.

¹² Cf. Knox, *Sources*, I:93.

¹³ Siegfried Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten*, p. 104.

¹⁴ The use of φιλεῖν and ἀγαπᾶν in Mt. 23:6 and Luke 11:43 agrees against Mark's θέλειν (12:38). The reversal of the sequence in Matthew from Mark, however, should be understood in terms of the addition in 23:7b ("to be called 'Rabbi' by men") and not in terms of agreement with Lk. 11:43. The infinitive, καλεῖσθαι, is rough and indicates a seam. Matthew reversed the sequence of Mark in order to facilitate the insertion of vv. 8-12. Cf. Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 42; Sief van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew*, p. 18; and Hubert Frankemölle, *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi. Studien zur Form und Traditionsgeschichte des "Evangeliums" nach Matthäus*, p. 99.

One of the characteristics which has been ascribed to the composition of Matthew's gospel is the tendency to choose a particular saying or incident in Mark's gospel as a departure point for further expansion.¹⁵ Kümmel delineated Matthew's use of Mark by noting that he "basically reworked the Markan account by means of a detailed modification, by major abbreviations and new formulations, but especially by inserting material".¹⁶ The examination of the evidence thus far suggests that this is also the case for chap. 23. The next question, which poses the most difficult problem, concerns the derivation of the common material in Matthew and Luke. What material was inserted, and how was it inserted? The analysis of Matthew 23:6-7a, Mark 12:38b-39 and Luke 11:43 indicates that Matthew used not only Mark¹⁷ but was familiar with a source very close to what is contained in Luke.

¹⁵ Peter F. Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message*, p. 14. He admitted that this characteristic may have derived from reliance on the same oral tradition rather than Mark, but he stated that it had "all the earmarks of an author who wished to expound further what is already familiar to his audience from a well known earlier gospel". Cf. pp. 14-16 for Ellis' excellent and important summary of the characteristics of Matthew's composition.

¹⁶ Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 106. Cf. Mk. 1:39 and Mt. 4:23ff., the sermon on the mount; Mk. 3:13-14 and Mt. 10:1, the missionary discourse; Mk. 4:1 and Mt. 13:1, the parable discourse; and Mk. 9:35-36 and Mt. 18:1, the discourse on community rules. Thus, one would expect Mk. 12:37bf. and Mt. 23 to follow this established pattern.

Recently, M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, pp. 3-224, has offered a new thesis that Matthew is essentially a midrashic expansion of Mark analogous to the Chronicler's expansion of Kings. The so called Q material is "Matthew's own embroidery of Mark" (p. 8). What is believed to be Q is a secondary handling of Matthew by Luke. According to Goulder, Matthew had Mark in front of him, the Hebrew Bible, and the Septuagint (hereafter referred to as LXX), and he invented all that is now attributable to Q and M. Matthew's main motive was to provide his church with a lectionary since Mark had provided one for only half the year. Even if one finds Goulder's arguments a bit stretched, his work does confirm the widely held view that Matthew is "a second edition of Mark" (the expression comes from W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 191).

¹⁷ The textual variant in Matthew 23:14 also impinges on the source critical problem. The evidence is very strong against its inclusion in the autograph. The evidence supporting the original absence of v. 14 (B x D L Z Θ Δ 33 892 it^{ae}m Syr^s Sa Origen) is substantial, representing a mixture of texttypes and a broad geographical base. On the other hand, the evidence for its inclusion is weakened by the variation in the order of the verses. f¹³ Φ 543 1187 it vulg^{cl} Syr^c Cop^{bo}, Chrysostom Hilary have the order vv. 12, 13, 14, 15; while the Textus Receptus G H K M S U Γ W Δ 0104 0107 0133 0138 157 565 700 it^f Syr^{ph} have the order vv. 12, 14, 13, 15. This indicates that later scribes probably added Mark 12:40a to the seven woes in Matthew, since it seemed to be appropriate as another example of the avarice and inhumanity of the scribes (and Pharisees). Were this verse original to Matthew, it would be easier to conclude that

It has been theorized that the correspondence between Matthew and Luke was possibly due to a common Aramaic source and that the variations were due to dependence upon differing Greek translations.¹⁸ Streeter cited this discourse as "the most striking of the very few cases" where diversity between Matthew and Luke can best be accounted for by an independent translation from an Aramaic original.¹⁹ But the best example (and the only one cited), Matthew 23:26 and Luke 11:41, is less than striking and may be ascribed to the misdirected redaction of Luke rather than to a mistranslated Aramaic original.²⁰ This theory also fails to account for the diverging order of the woes which cannot be explained as a mistranslation.

Others have held that the divergence is so wide in both vocabulary and order that it is unlikely that Luke and Matthew were working from a common source at all.²¹ Bonnard observed that the complexity is so great that it cannot solely be unraveled by the hypothesis of a dependence upon two identical written sources, Mark and the logia, and more importance must be placed upon oral tradition and the respective milieux of Matthew and Luke.²² It is possible that Matthew and Luke used different recensions of Q,²³ but there is no way of

Mark excerpted from Matthew. B. C. Butler, *The Originality of St. Matthew: A Critique of the Two-Document Hypothesis*, p. 75, recognized this and tried to make a case that v. 14 was omitted in one line of the textual tradition because of a homoeoarchemenon; but he lamely added that the resulting eight woes, instead of the (Semitic) seven, is "inconvenient" to say the least. If Matthew utilized Mark, as seems to be the case, he chose not to include the reference to the spoiling of widows. This implies that Matthew was not simply interested in the ethical corruption of the scribes and Pharisees nor intent on mustering all the evidence available to discredit their moral character. The charges in chap. 23 have to do with the defalcation of responsibility on the part of the scribes and Pharisees, specifically in the area of teaching, and with the abuse of the external trappings of piety.

¹⁸ For example, cf. Theodore H. Robinson, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 188.

¹⁹ Streeter, *Four Gospels*, p. 253.

²⁰ Cf. below, pp. 144-145.

²¹ So Allen, *Matthew*, p. 243; and W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew*, p. 283.

²² Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p. 337. Streeter, *Four Gospels*, p. 253, also believed that one cannot refer to a single written source without raising great difficulties.

²³ So McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 329. Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus*, p. 332, contended that Matthew 23 developed independently of Mark and stands as the composition of Matthew. Luke seized the same tradition at another stage and adapted it to his particular circumstances. More recently, John Pairman Brown, "The Form of 'Q' Known to Matthew", *NTS*, VIII:32, 1961-1962, argued that most of the M elements in Matthew, apart from the parables, had previously been combined with Q to form a much expanded Q^{Mt}.

proving this conclusively.²⁴ Schweizer concluded that in the face of the evidence the only thing that can be said is that "neither the sequence of the sayings nor their setting is fixed by tradition".²⁵ When all is considered, it still seems the best, although still tentative, solution to explain the similarity between Matthew and Luke by positing a common source,²⁶ whether written or oral, which they utilized perhaps at different stages of its traditioning process.²⁷ The fact that they may have used different recensions of Q would explain some of the differences. However, the freedom with which the evangelists used this common source, which reflected their own milieux, interests, and purposes, may be assumed to explain most of the differences. Matthew 23 reflects the redaction of Matthew as no other passage does.

The redaction of the evangelists may indeed explain the discrepancy in the sequence of the woes between the two gospels. The original order of the woes in Q may be theorized to have been: 1) you tithe, 2) you cleanse, 3) you love chief seats, 4) you are like graves, 5) you bind heavy burdens, 6) you build the tombs of the prophets, 7) you take the key of the kingdom. The first four were directed against the Pharisees and the last three were aimed at the scribes. Luke took the second woe in Q concerning the cleansing of vessels and modified it so that he might have an appropriate setting (a dinner discourse common in Luke) for the woes (11:39-41; cf. below, pp. 93-94) since there apparently was no setting in Q. If this is granted, what is left is a balance of three woes against the Pharisees and three against the scribes in precisely the same order that they now appear in Luke's gospel.

²⁴ The differences between Matthew and Luke may simply be attributable to their respective redaction of a common source document.

²⁵ Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, p. 430. However, this need not be the case.

²⁶ Erich Klostermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, p. 181; Bultmann, *History*, p. 113; Manson, *Sayings*, p. 96; G. D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel According to Matthew*, pp. 30-31; Josef Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 248; J. C. Fenton, *The Gospel of Saint Matthew*, pp. 365-366; Rolf Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium*, pp. 68-69; Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 481; Wilhelm Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen der Redaktion von Matthäus 23", *Orientierung an Jesus. Zur Theologie der Synoptiker. Für Josef Schmid*, p. 290; Ellis, *Matthew*, p. 78; and H. Benedict Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 188. Of course, the works of Schulz, Q; Dieter Lührmann, *Die Redaktion der Logienquelle*; and Paul Hoffmann, *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle*, presume a Q document.

²⁷ Davies, *Setting*, p. 366, has cautioned, regarding whether Q was written or oral, that "the distinction between these forms should not be exaggerated in the first century milieu".

Matthew disregarded the distinctions between scribes and Pharisees. He took the fifth woe about binding heavy burdens and placed it after 23:2-3 so that he could balance and reinterpret the statement which served to introduce the discourse against the scribes and Pharisees. The third woe in Q about chief seats and greetings was placed by Matthew in its present position in vv. 6-7a because: 1) he was influenced by the parallel material in Mark 12:38; 2) it fit in well with his special material in v. 5; and 3) it provided an introduction to the very important material in vv. 8-12. With a rearrangement of the order so that "greetings in the market place" was last and with the addition of the *Stichwort* 'Paßßi in v. 7b, v. 7 provided an introduction for the condemnation of titles in vv. 8-10. Matthew wanted the sixth woe, attacking the scribes as the sons of the murderers of the prophets, to be last so that it would tie into and introduce the murder motif in vv. 32-37. Therefore, he took the last woe in Q about taking the key of the kingdom and placed it first since it was very appropriate as an initial charge against the scribes and Pharisees.

As a result of these maneuvers, Matthew was minus two woes from the original seven (a predominant number in the Gospel), so he added two woes from his *Sondergut* (M): v. 15 on proselytism and vv. 16-22 on oaths. Both of these woes have an abnormally high number of Matthean words and certainly must be considered insertions from his special material. Matthew either changed these logia into woes (certainly vv. 16-22) or created them (possibly v. 15) to become the second and third woes in his sequence. This explains the resulting order: 1) you tithe (now fourth); 2) you cleanse (now fifth); 3) you love chief seats (removed); 4) you bind heavy burdens (removed); 5) you are like graves (now sixth); 6) you build tombs (now seventh); 7) you take the key of the kingdom (now first). The thesis does not hinge on the correctness of this theory, but it does seem to be the best explanation of the data and may allow for a Q document that was used by both Matthew and Luke. The variations between the woes of Matthew and Luke besides the order and the explanation for some of the assumptions involved in the presentation of this theory will be discussed in chap. 5.

Conclusion

It will be assumed, unless the evidence compels otherwise, that, on the one hand, the passage in Luke 11:37-52 is basically Q with Luke's editorial alterations to construct an appropriate setting for

the woes and with changes and omissions in individual sayings that were unintelligible or uninteresting to both Luke and his Gentile Christian audience.²⁸ On the other hand, it will be assumed that the passage in Matthew 23 contains the combination of Mark, Q, and what may be called M, as well as Matthean transition verses and summaries. Thus, the earlier judgment of Manson is believed to hold true at least as a working hypothesis for the study of Matthew 23:

This discourse is like all the great speeches in Mt., a conflation. It uses matter from Mk. 12:38-40; it has other matter in common with Lk. 11:37-52, and therefore presumably from Q; and it has sayings peculiar to Mt. and probably derived from M.²⁹

The correspondence between Matthew and Luke reflect their use of a common source; the differences reflect largely the redaction of the evangelists. Therefore, rather than being simply a source critical

²⁸ Cf. McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 329. It has been suggested by Robinson, *Matthew*, p. 188; Schmid, *Matthäus*, p. 248; and Lührmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 47, that Luke preserved the more original order of Q while Matthew made fewer changes in the individual sentences. This seems to be an accurate account of the facts as the original sequence of woes has been worked out in this study and as the individual woes have been analyzed in the fifth chapter. It is conceivable how one could have arrived at what is found in Luke's woes from what is found in Matthew's, but it is unimaginable how one could arrive at Matthew from Luke.

²⁹ Manson, *Sayings*, p. 94. Some have contended that Matthew draws upon Mark for the outline of his expansion. James M. Gibbs, "Purpose and Pattern in Matthew's Use of the Title 'Son of David'", *NTS*, X:462, 1964, saw a tripartite outline from Mark: a) 12:38-39, scribes seeking honor; b) 12:40a, inward evil and outward piety; c) 12:40b, ultimately greater condemnation. Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p. 333, saw Mk. 12:38-39 as the essential theme of Mt. 23:1-12 and Mk. 12:40 as a threat expanded in 23:13-36. This is possible. Matthew may have been influenced by Mark, but he need not have used Mark as his outline.

The delimitation of what is M and what is Matthew's own composition is a subject of debate. Bultmann, *History*, p. 113, identified as M: vv. 2-3, 5, (8-10?), 11-12, 15-22, 24. Matthew's own formulations are found in vv. 8-10?, 28, and 33. Manson, *Sayings*, p. 95, provisionally assigned to M: vv. 2-3, 5, 7b-12, 15-22, 24, 28, and 32f. Kilpatrick, *Origins*, saw vv. 2-3, 5, 7b-10, 15-22, 24 and 27f. as peculiar to Matthew with v. 26, 30, and 32 questionably so, and v. 34 as Matthew's own formulation. Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p. 224, identified vv. 2-3, 5, 8-10, 15-22, 24 and 32f. as *Sondergut*; and Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", essentially follows him, but identified vv. 32-34 as Matthew's construction along with vv. 1, 5a, 7b, 28 and, possibly, v. 34.

Certainly, all are agreed that vv. 2-3, 5b-7a, 8-10 comprise pre-Matthean Jewish Christian material. Charles E. Carlston, "The Things that Defile (Mark vii.14) and the Law in Matthew and Mark", *NTS*, XV:91, 1968-1969, concluded that "behind Matthew lies a different and much more severe kind of Jewish-Christian community from whose rich quarries he was fully prepared to draw if necessary, modifying where possible to serve his own ecclesiastical interests". Cf. Davies, *Setting*, pp. 387-401.

Q may then be identified as vv. 4, 6, 7a (and Mk.), 12, 13, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29-31, 34-36 and 37-39.

problem, chap. 23 must be viewed as a composition of Matthew in that composition entails the combining of parts and elements to form a whole. Bornkamm stated that "...connecting diverse sayings and forming a unitary discourse out of them is particularly characteristic of the technique of composition so masterfully practiced by this evangelist".³⁰ It is the final state of the text as a whole that reflects Matthew's intention, as that reflects his work as an author; and it is this with which the rest of the study will be concerned. What did Matthew intend to communicate to his Christian reader through his combination of material from various sources into a unified whole?

EVIDENCE FOR MATTHEW 23 AS A MATTHEAN COMPOSITION

It is necessary at this point to demonstrate that chap. 23 is a Matthean composition — that Matthew brought disparate parts together and provided the overarching unity in the chapter. Each verse will not be considered in depth; only general indications will be dealt with which would earmark chap. 23 as a composition.³¹ The composition of the various units in chap. 23 will be studied in the exegetical analysis that follows this chapter.

Inconsistencies in Matthew 23

There are inconsistencies in chap. 23 which imply that the discourse could not originally have been unified and that heterogeneous matter has been woven together.³² The seams still remain visible. For example, there is a basic contradiction between 23:2-3 and 23:4. Verses 2-3 imply that the teaching of the Pharisees should be fully accepted: "Therefore, all things whatsoever they tell you, do and keep". The

³⁰ Günther Bornkamm, "The Risen Lord and the Earthly Jesus: Matthew 28:16-20", *The Future of Our Religious Past. Essays in Honour of Rudolf Bultmann*, p. 206. C. Spicq, "Une Allusion au Docteur de Justice dans Matthieu, XXIII, 10?" *RB*, LXVI:387-396, 1959, maintained that chap. 23 was a perfect example of the genre of composition peculiar to the evangelist. Cf. also Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 286; David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 308; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 430; Ellis, *Matthew*, p. 80; and Robert Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition*, p. 173. From an altogether different perspective see the comments of Goulder, *Midrash*, p. 420.

³¹ Goulder, *Midrash*, p. 429, made the observation that "in the whole chapter there are 646 words, of which 180 are characteristic of Matthew". Cf. Appendix A.

³² Cf. particularly Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", pp. 38ff., and Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 445. In contrast with Matthew, there are no inconsistencies in the discourse in Luke 11 with the one exception of vv. 38-41, which apparently has been jarred from its original context to form the setting; see below pp. 93-94.

objection is raised that the scribes and Pharisees fail to practice what they themselves preach. However, v. 4 (cf. Lk. 11:46) implies that what the Pharisees require is an impossible burden on the shoulders of men. They bind heavy burdens by what they tell men to do and to keep. There is an inherent contradiction, therefore, between vv. 2-3 and v. 4 which indicates that these verses could not have been originally of one piece.

When individual verses throughout chap. 23 are considered by themselves, further contradictions appear in their particular assertions. Verses 8-10 also stand in sharp contrast with the sweeping approval of the teaching authority of the scribes and Pharisees expressed in v. 3. In v. 8, it is emphatically announced that only one is your teacher, presumably δ Χριστός in v. 10; and the titles of the Rabbinate are rejected outright.³³ The woes in 23:13 and 15 imply that the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees shuts men out of the kingdom and that adherence to that teaching makes their proselytes double sons of Hell. Furthermore, it is insinuated in 23:27 that simply having contact with the scribes and Pharisees makes one unclean; while in 23:16-22, 24 and 26 their casuistry is reduced to an absurdity. Whereas it is maintained in 23:3-4 that the scribes and Pharisees fail to do as they tell others to do, it is asserted in 23:5 that they *do* practice, but their motives are impugned. The woe in 23:23 also affirms that the scribes and Pharisees pay scrupulous attention to tithing.

An inconsistency in the audience, which one would assume to be appropriate to the point at issue in the various components of chap. 23, is also conspicuous.³⁴ The audience is specifically identified in v. 1 as the crowds and disciples. However, vv. 8-10 can only be directed to the disciples of the Christian community (v. 10: "One is your master, the Christ") who apparently needed to be warned against the adoption of a Rabbinic hierarchy.³⁵ Verse 13 switches from the third person description of the Pharisees to direct address, but there is no indication that the Pharisees and scribes are present. If the woes originated in a direct encounter, the stage setting for that encounter

³³ Cf. below, pp. 57-58.

³⁴ This has been noted by Schmid, *Matthäus*, pp. 247-248; Werner Georg Kümmel, "Die Weherufe über die Schriftgelehrten und Pharisäer (Matthäus 23, 13-36)", *Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament?* p. 137; and Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 430.

³⁵ Cf. below, pp. 61-63.

has disappeared.³⁶ Finally, v. 34 implies that all Israel is being addressed ("I send to you..."), and in v. 37, Jerusalem is specifically apostrophized.

The inconsistencies indicate that chap. 23 is composed of several parts that apparently have been spliced together by Matthew through *Stichwort* and thought association.³⁷

Movement of Thought

Another indication that chap. 23 is the composition of Matthew is the evidence that there is a deliberate and well ordered movement of ideas.³⁸ Haenchen was the first to emphasize fully Matthew's work as author in chap. 23.³⁹ From the individual parts, Haenchen observed that Matthew created a carefully balanced and thematically consistent composition that moves toward a dramatic climax. He noted particularly the progression of argument. It begins almost gently with a statement giving due respect to the opponents, but the rebukes become more and more passionate. Haenchen calls vv. 8-12 a resting point, the quiet before the storm; then the seven woes follow with the climactic accusation that the scribes and Pharisees are murderers. Finally, there is a fervent, if sad, decree of judgment upon Jerusalem which is punctuated by Jesus' departure from the Temple never to return again. This strongly suggests that the frame (*Rahmenbemerkung*) of the entire discourse and the arrangement of its parts goes back to the evangelist himself, and recognition of this is essential for understanding his intentions in chap. 23.

Matthew's redaction of his material respected in most cases the

³⁶ Paul S. Minear, "False Prophecy and Hypocrisy in the Gospel of Matthew", *Neues Testament und Kirche. Für Rudolf Schnackenburg*, p. 88. It is judged unlikely that there originally was a stage setting in Q for the woes from the evidence of Lk. 11:37-39.

³⁷ Goulder, *Midrash*, p. 422, n. 59, complained about "the consistency game" of Haenchen's analysis that "it never occurs to Haenchen that Matthew's consistency might not reach his exacting standard: the evangelist is treated like a candidate for Ph.D. and needless to say his thesis is referred". Except for these words, Goulder fails to take seriously into account or to explain the inconsistencies in Matthew 23.

³⁸ Cf. Ellis, *Matthew*, pp. 14-16.

³⁹ Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 57, stated: "Gerade Matthäus hat sich als ein Schriftsteller hohen Ranges erwiesen bei der Komposition der grossen Reden, die weit über das hinausgehen, was vor ihm schon an Versuchen einer thematischer Zusammenfassung Vorhanden war. Das gilt nicht nur von dem berühmtesten Beispiel dieser Art, der Bergpredigt, sondern auch von der Rede gegen den Pharisäismus".

formulation of an earlier time,⁴⁰ but his rearrangement and his juxtaposition of independent units of tradition gave them a significance which they did not previously possess.⁴¹ The result reflects Matthew's theology and intention, for an insertion of traditional material into a different context overrides the original connotation of that material.⁴² The new context is redactional. Lohr's overlooked insight on Matthew's composition bears repeating:

Though it is clear that he worked only with "ready-made" phrases and traditional themes, treasuring every item that had been handed down to him, he was able to impose a single message on the material by relating the occurrences of these themes and phrases to contexts which would enrich their meaningfulness.⁴³

He thus imposed his own message on traditional material by arranging it into a montage and creating a new context.

THE CONTEXT OF MATTHEW 23

It has long been recognized that Matthew's transitional pericopes afford important clues for the interpretation of a discourse as a whole.⁴⁴ Consequently, 22:41-46, 23:37-39 and 24:1-2 require special attention in order to establish the context of chap. 23 and to discover how they might be relevant for interpreting Matthew's understanding of the discourse.⁴⁵

Matthew 22:41-46

Matthew's account of the question concerning David's son which leads into chap. 23 has apparently undergone small but significant

⁴⁰ Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 290.

⁴¹ Odil Hannes Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des Deuteronomischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum*, pp. 290-291.

⁴² For example, cf. the discussion of van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders*, pp. 105-106, on Mt. 23:24.

⁴³ Charles H. Lohr, "Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew", *CBQ*, XXIII:419, 1961. Ellis, *Matthew*, p. 80, n. 133, commented: "What is new (and literary) about ch. 23 is that Matthew composes for Jesus out of isolated sayings in the tradition a complete prophetic discourse similar in many ways to those found in the books of the prophets".

⁴⁴ Ellis, *Matthew*, p. 89; and cf. pp. 18-19. Charles E. Carlston, "Interpreting the Gospel of Matthew", *Int*, XXIX:8, 1975, noted: "A somewhat more difficult way of isolating particular Matthean concerns is to look closely at the way sections begin or end".

⁴⁵ Mt. 24:51 is also important for understanding Mt. 23; see below, pp. 122-123.

modifications when compared with Mark and Luke. It should be noted first that Matthew has the question addressed specifically to the Pharisees (22:41). Previously, they had been mentioned by Matthew in 22:15 and 22:34 without synoptic parallel. The audience for the pericope in Mark 12:35-37a is not identified, but it may be considered to be composed of the amorphous crowd (cf. 12:37b). The question in 12:35 is not posed directly to the scribes themselves but in the third person: "How say (λέγουσιν) the scribes that the christ is the son of David?". In the parallel passage in Luke 20:41-44, Jesus simply addresses "them" (αὐτούς). This may refer to the scribes in 20:39 except that Luke also includes the third person plural verb in the question: "How say they?" not "How say you?".⁴⁶ The precise identification of the audience was seemingly unimportant for Luke. Matthew, however, not only identified the Pharisees specifically as the participants in the dialogue, he also made the question and the response conform to the situation of a direct encounter: "What do you think?". In both Mark and Luke, Jesus himself provides the answer to the question (Mk. 12:36 and Lk. 20:42), while the Pharisees answer for themselves in Matthew 22:42. Thus it seems clear that Matthew has changed the pericope into a *Streitgespräch* where Jesus turns the tables on his questioners and launches an attack directly against them.⁴⁷

The question which was raised by Jesus was not simply a theological curiosity which could be hashed out in the seminar room. For Matthew, it was the most important question of all since it implicitly pertained to the lordship of Jesus Christ.⁴⁸ It is the sonship of Jesus

⁴⁶ Some manuscripts include "the scribes".

⁴⁷ Bultmann, *History*, p. 51. David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity*, p. 116, remarked: "Mark's monologue has become a dramatic dialogue between the messiah and his archenemies, the Pharisees. The term marking their uniting together (*synagein*) suggests that he turns on them en masse—just as they had earlier come as a body to attack him (Mt. 22:15, 34)". Several commentators have recognized that the mention of the Pharisees was intentional on Matthew's part: Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 180; Fenton, *Matthew*, p. 359; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, pp. 330-331; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 157; and Hill, *Matthew*, p. 307.

⁴⁸ Cf. Günther Bornkamm, "End-Expectation and the Church in Matthew", *Tradition and Interpretation*, p. 33; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 427; and Hay, *Glory*, p. 116, who thinks that Matthew's reshaping of Mark has also subtly changed the christological meaning of the question. On the meaning of the son of David, cf. further: Gibbs, "Purpose and Pattern", pp. 446-464; A. Suhl, "Der Davidsohn im Matthäus-Evangelium", *ZNW*, LIX:57-81, 1968; and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Son of David Tradition and MT 22:41-46 and Parallels", *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament*, pp. 113-126.

which is transparently at stake in this question from the standpoint of the evangelist.⁴⁹ The Pharisees represented the leaders of Israel⁵⁰ who sat on Moses' seat, and their inability to answer this question did not just expose their deficient understanding. It was a matter of deficient faith which was unable to accept Jesus for what he was as the Christ, the son of David and the son of God.⁵¹ Mark 12:34 (cf. Lk. 20:40) was consequently reserved by Matthew for the conclusion of this controversy dialogue in 22:46. He must have considered it to be more effective as the fitting conclusion to the disputation with the Jewish leaders because it served to highlight their incapacity to reply to this crucial question.⁵²

It is also notable that any trace of praise for the scribe that is found in Mark 12:32-34 (cf. Lk. 10:25) is altogether removed from Matthew. In the Markan account, the scribe concurred with Jesus' appraisal of the first commandment; and Jesus responded by affirming the scribe — he had answered well and was not far from the kingdom of God (12:34). This is absent from Matthew.⁵³ The motivation of the question was quite sincere in Mark (12:28), but in Matthew the Pharisee only posed the question to test Jesus (22:35).⁵⁴ As far as Matthew was concerned — and in this he was quite consistent — it was no longer possible for a scribe or a Pharisee to be near the kingdom of heaven. The reasons are clear. They did not accept Jesus as the Christ, the son of David and David's Lord; and they were perceived as the ones guilty of shutting the kingdom of heaven to men, while refusing to enter themselves (23:13).⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Cf. Hay, *Glory*, pp. 116-118; Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, pp. 101-102; and Frank Stagg, "Matthew", *BBC*, VIII:210, who observed: "... Jesus took the initiative in posing a question which not only silenced his opponents but also brought into focus the basic question as to his identity".

⁵⁰ Cf. below, pp. 41-46.

⁵¹ Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 480; and Green, *Matthew*, p. 186.

⁵² So McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 328; Heinz Joachim Held, "Matthew as Interpreter of the Miracle Stories", *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, p. 236; Fenton, *Matthew*, p. 360; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 157; Hill, *Matthew*, p. 308; and Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 427.

⁵³ The scribe's statement in Mk. 12:33, that to love one's neighbor as one's self is more important than burnt-offerings and sacrifices, was emphasized in Matthew as something the Pharisees especially failed to comprehend (cf. 9:13 and 12:7).

⁵⁴ Cf. also Mt. 16:1; 19:3 and 22:18.

⁵⁵ Cf. Eduard Schweizer, "Matthäus 21-25", *Orientierung an Jesus. Zur Theologie der Synoptiker. Für Josef Schmid*, p. 368.

Matthew deliberately sharpened the issues between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in the previous controversies.⁵⁶ His alteration of the final pericope that precedes chap. 23 has set the scene for the impending denunciations which follow as a climax. For the first time, Jesus has openly taken the offensive against his opponents. Because of Matthew's handling of what preceded chap. 23, the reader has been prepared for the harsh judgment which follows.

Matthew 23:37-24:2

The transitional pericope at the close of the speech in chap. 23, vv. 37-39, is, as mentioned previously, in a quite different context in Luke. Whether Luke or Matthew preserved the original context of this lament, if indeed there was one, will be dealt with in due course. What will be examined at this point is the effect conveyed by the text as it stands in Matthew, particularly in conjunction with the beginning of chap. 24.

A comparison of Matthew with Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:1-4 reveals that the pericope of the widow's mite is not present in Matthew. This fact has generally been overlooked by commentators; but as Lambrecht has urged, the "omission" deserves more attention than it has received because it is not without purpose.⁵⁷ McNeile observed earlier that its absence is inexplicable unless Matthew had wanted to join chap. 23 more closely to chap. 24.⁵⁸ This observation seems to be supported by the close relation of 23:38 and 24:2.

After the fervent declaration in 23:38, "Your house is abandoned unto you desolate", Jesus says in 23:39 that you will not see me again and promptly departs from the Temple (24:1). In 24:2 he predicts its destruction. The striking coherence of 23:37-39 and 24:1-2 in Matthew, which has no parallel in the other gospels, suggests that

⁵⁶ Krister Stendahl, "Matthew", *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 792; John L. McKenzie, "The Gospel According to Matthew", *JBC*, p. 102; and Hill, *Matthew*, p. 308. Charles E. Carlston, "The Things that Defile", p. 85, n. 2, pointedly observed, against any thesis that Matthew still held out hopes for a reconciliation with Judaism, that Matthew omitted the praise of the scribe, turned an earnest question into a malicious one, and turned the whole question over the Great Commandment into a judgment on the Pharisees.

⁵⁷ J. Lambrecht, "The Parousia Discourse: Composition and Content in Mt., XXIV-XXV", *L'Évangile selon Matthieu: Redaction et théologie*, p. 314.

⁵⁸ McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 342. Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, p. 332, argued that the omission can only be explained if Matthew is independent of Mark at this point. However, there is no reason to doubt that Matthew made use of Mark, particularly if a viable reason can be found for his omission of this pericope.

this was not coincidental but deliberate on Matthew's part. The inclusion of the pericope of the widow's mite would not only have interrupted the continuity of these verses, its touching portrayal of the widow who gave her last penny would have totally ruined the dramatic effect created by the crescendo of charges in chap. 23. The story of the widow tugs at the heartstrings and does not fit the mood of judgment which permeates chap. 23 so that its omission is significant and may be viewed as calculated. This tells something further about Matthew's intention in chap. 23. It was so important to Matthew's purpose to unite chaps. 23 and 24 that he was forced to omit the story of the widow that was present in his Markan source.

The chapter division at 24:1 may be misleading since it creates the impression that 24:1-2 is unrelated to the preceding. It seems rather that these verses should not only be considered as closely tied to 23:37-39, but might even be viewed as a part of chap. 23 — the actual conclusion — and not the beginning of another discourse. Hummel has vigorously argued this point.⁵⁹

When the disciples came to Jesus to show him the buildings (or construction) of the Temple, Jesus replied, Οὐ βλέπετε ταῦτα πάντα; (24:2). In Mark the question is framed differently: Βλέπεις ταύτας τὰς μεγάλας οἰκοδομὰς; (13:2; cf. Lk. 21:6). Hummel noted that the neuter ταῦτα in Matthew's text could not refer to the feminine buildings (ἡ οἰκοδομή) but rather refers to the content of the discourse to this point.⁶⁰ Specifically, ταῦτα πάντα may be seen to refer to 23:36, ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἥξει ταῦτα πάντα ἐπὶ τὴν γενεὰν ταύτην.⁶¹ Therefore, Jesus is not actually alluding to the building

⁵⁹ Reinhart Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium*, pp. 85-86. Others have noted with McNeile the close connection of chaps. 23 and 24 because of the omission of the widow pericope: Willi Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel*, p. 199; H. Van der Kwaak, "Die Klage über Jerusalem (Matth. XXIII 37-39)", *NovT*, VIII:160, 1966; Steck, *Israel*, p. 290, n. 6; Walker, *Heilsgeschichte*, p. 59; Lloyd Gaston, *No Stone on Another: Studies in the Significance of the Fall of Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 468; Lambrecht, "The Parousia Discourse", pp. 314-318; Schweizer, "Matthäus 21-25", p. 368, and *Matthew*, p. 448; and Green, *Matthew*, p. 198. Against this, cf. Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit: Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus*, p. 113.

⁶⁰ Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 86. Lambrecht, "The Parousia Discourse", p. 317, n. 19, disagrees with Hummel at this point but his arguments are not as persuasive.

⁶¹ Cf. 13:34, 51, 56 and 24:3, 33, 34. Ταῦτα πάντα may refer to the content of a discourse as in chap. 13, or it may refer to the events of the end time as in chap. 24. In 23:36 it refers to events; in 24:2 it refers to the content of chap. 23 which prophesied these events.

at all. His response is evoked by the disciples' marvel at the grandeur of the Temple, and this manifested to him that they had not understood what had been said in chap. 23. Since they had not understood (οὐ βλέπετε, expecting a positive answer),⁶² Jesus must further explain, in clearer terms, what he meant by the preceding. The Temple will be destroyed; God has forsaken it. Of course, this must be assumed to be Matthew's own explanation for his community.

In support of this interpretation, the construction of 24:2a is very similar to the question at the conclusion of chap. 13, Συνήκατε ταῦτα πάντα; (13:51). The phrase "all these things" clearly refers to the content of the preceding discourse (cf. 13:56). The disciples answer "yes" in 13:51, but in 24:2 the question assumes that they have not understood. Thus 24:2b differs substantially in its intention from that of Mark 13:2. In Mark, the text clearly attempts to dampen the misled exuberance of the disciples over the significance of the Temple. In Matthew, this is only incidental; 24:2b amplifies the meaning of 23:37-39: "Do not marvel at this Temple; it will be destroyed, and this is what I have just been talking about!". Because of the modifications made by Matthew, chap. 23 must have been connected in his mind with the judgment of Israel which came in the destruction of the Temple.⁶³ Therefore, one might also assume that Matthew collected and placed the material in chap. 23 immediately before the apocalyptic discourse with this in view.

Chapter 24, then, should not be viewed as a new discourse.⁶⁴ The opening of the discourse must be considered to be 23:1. The fact that there is a change of place and a narrowing of the audience in 24:1 should not lead to the conclusion that a new discourse begins that is totally independent of chap. 23. This is the same kind of change which occurs in chap. 13. Jesus initially addresses the crowds by the sea, outside the house (13:1-2), and what follows is open proclamation. At the juncture in 13:36, Jesus left the crowds and

⁶² Against this, Lambrecht, "The Parousia Discourse", p. 317, n. 19, believed βλέπειν should have its normal meaning, "to see". But this does not seem to be the case in light of the Matthean emphasis on the disciples' ability to see; cf. 13:13, 19, 23 and particularly, 13:16. Often Jesus checks his teaching by asking if the disciples understood (cf. 13:51; 15:10; 16:9, 12; and 17:13), but the verb συνιέναι is used.

⁶³ This opinion would be strengthened even more if it could be shown that Matthew deliberately utilized 23:37-39 for the conclusion of the woe discourse when he found it in an independent context. See below, for a fuller discussion, pp. 187-197.

⁶⁴ In this, B. W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew*, p. 317, was correct.

went inside the house where his disciples came to him for private instruction. The structure of chaps. 23 and 24 is no different from that of chap. 13. First, there is open proclamation to the crowds and disciples in the Temple followed by private instruction for the disciples outside both the Temple and the city on the Mount of Olives.

It should also be noted that the typical Matthean transition sentence which usually closes a discourse (cf. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; and 26:1) is absent. It is included at the conclusion of chap. 25, which suggests that chaps. 23-25 were considered one discourse; and the same themes may be seen running through all three chapters.⁶⁵ Again, if chaps. 23 and 24 are viewed as two separate discourses this would also break Matthew's normal pattern whereby narrative material usually precedes a discourse.⁶⁶ The conclusion is that there is no reason to consider chap. 24 as unconnected to chap. 23 and every reason to see them as connected. This is important because it can then be perceived that the mood of eschatological judgment which pervades chaps. 24-25 applies also to the intention and mood of chap. 23. It can also be seen that chaps. 24-25 are basically warnings directed to the Christian community, and it may be that chap. 23 should be viewed in this light as well.

The apocalyptic discourse actually begins with the new formulation in 24:3. Here Jesus takes up his place outside the city to continue his instruction to the disciples and a new theme is taken up—the fate of the community of Jesus. Chap. 23 explains the judgment which has come to Israel with the fall of Jerusalem; chap. 24 deals with the cosmic judgment at the end of time (συντελεία τοῦ αἰῶνος, 24:3) that is ushered in by the παρουσία of Jesus (both words are without synoptic parallel) and which Christians must face with all mankind.⁶⁷ That this is an accurate interpretation of the facts is shown by the major concern in chap. 24, apparently Matthean, to make absolutely clear that the fall of the Temple and the end of time were distinct events.⁶⁸ The church must continue on for some time to

⁶⁵ Cf. Schweizer, "Matthäus 21-25".

⁶⁶ So Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 86; Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 295; and Green, *Matthew*, p. 198.

⁶⁷ On these distinctive Matthean words, cf. Lambrecht, "The Parousia Discourse", pp. 318-319.

⁶⁸ Cf. Stagg, "Matthew", p. 217; Schmid, *Matthäus*, p. 247; Douglas R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, pp. 177-179; Ellis, *Matthew*, p. 90; Lambrecht, "The Parousia Discourse", p. 318; and Kingsbury, *Structure*, p. 29.

come;⁶⁹ and they are warned not to go the way of Israel that was exemplified in chap. 23—what happened to them may happen to you. This seems to be the crux of the warnings which follow.

Matthew 23 in the Context of Matthew 21-25

Schweizer has discovered an overall pattern imposed on the structure of Matthew 21-25 which is also pertinent for establishing the distinctive Matthean context of chap. 23.⁷⁰ The pattern first appears in the arrangement of 21:23-22:14 which Schweizer identified as a trial (*Verhör*), by which the Jewish leaders are examined in their attempt to challenge Jesus, the pronouncement of guilt (*Schuldspruch*), the sentence (*Urteilsverkündung*), the execution of the sentence against Israel (*Urteilstvollstreckung*), and the warning to the community of Jesus.

The cross-examination of the Jewish leaders is found in 21:23-27 where they question Jesus' authority to teach. The question is left unresolved when they refuse to answer Jesus' counter question about the authority of John; but, ultimately, it is *their* authority to teach which is called into question because of their inability to answer without facing damaging repercussions. It is an inability attributed to dishonest motives and their failure to believe. The "pronouncement of the verdict", however, actually follows in 21:28-32 with the parable of the two sons. The Jewish leaders pronounce the verdict themselves in 21:31—guilty!⁷¹ Jesus makes it unequivocal by announcing that the taxcollectors and harlots will enter into the kingdom of God before them. John came and preached the way of righteousness and they did not believe even after "seeing". Unlike the first son in the parable, they did not later change their minds (μετεμελήθητε ὥστερον is repeated in v. 32 from v. 29 so that the parallel would not be lost on the reader). The "measure of punishment" is found

⁶⁹ Stagg, "Matthew", p. 217, stated: "A major concern is to affirm a period of indefinite length between the destruction of the Temple and the return of Christ at the end of the age. Matthew's concern is with the life of the church during this period between the two catastrophic events..."

⁷⁰ The following is basically a summary of Schweizer's article, "Matthäus 21-25", pp. 364-371, reprinted in *Matthäus und seine Gemeinde*, pp. 116-125. Cf. also *Matthew*, pp. 400-403, and the commentary.

⁷¹ Matthew was apparently quite fond of having the opponents of Jesus "put their foot in their mouth" and ironically condemn themselves not only here in 21:31 but also in 21:45; 22:42; 27:25; and 27:40-43. On the textual problem in 21:29-31, cf. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, pp. 55-56; and the commentaries ad loc.

in the parable of the Wicked Tenants, 21:33-46, particularly in 21:41 where once again the Jewish leaders themselves ironically pronounce the sentence: "those miserable men will be miserably destroyed". The phrase, ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, occurs four times in Matthew. Schweizer contended because of its infrequency that Matthew deliberately included it in 21:43 ("the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation producing its fruits"), because he intended this remark to refer the reader to the judgment already expressed in v. 31 where the phrase first occurs.⁷² This seems to be the best explanation of an otherwise unusual lapse in Matthew's studious avoidance of the phrase "kingdom of God". The "execution of the sentence" comprises the third parable about the Wedding Feast. This is connected to the previous parable by the repeated phrase ἀπέστειλεν τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ in 21:34 and 22:3, 4. The execution occurs in 22:7 when the angry king destroyed the murderers and burned their city.

This last parable is more than a thinly veiled allegory of the rejection of Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem because of their rejection of God's son. Schweizer noted that if that was its only intention, the inclusion of vv. 11-14 (without parallel) would have been superfluous.⁷³ Because the parable is continued, it implies that vv. 1-10 was not a climax. Matthew intended to warn his own community (cf. 22:14) with the parable of the man without wedding clothes.⁷⁴ The man is bound and thrown into outer darkness (cf. 13:42, 50; 24:51; 25:30), and thereby the community is warned in this surprising turn of events that what happened to Israel can also happen to them.

Schweizer is convinced that this trial schema outlined above is intentional on Matthew's part because it is repeated in chaps. 22-25. The "trial" of Israel is represented by the controversy dialogues in 22:15-46. Once again, as in 21:27, the Jewish leaders are unable to answer Jesus' counter questions: in 22:22, concerning Caesar's tribute; in 22:34, the question concerning the resurrection; and in 22:46, the question concerning the son of David. The "verdict" follows in

⁷² Schweizer, "Matthäus 21-25", p. 365.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 366-367.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 367. The parable probably is more of an allegory with the wedding clothes signifying "works". Cf. Karl Paul Donfried, "The Allegory of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) as a summary of Matthean Theology", *JBL*, XCIII:415-428, 1974, who argued that the "oil" referred to "works".

23:1-32 which pronounces a resounding "guilty!" Schweizer identified 23:33-36 as the "sentence"—the punishment for the murder of all righteous blood will fall upon this generation, and they will not be able to escape the judgment of Gehenna. The "execution of the sentence" is carried out in 23:37-24:2 with God himself (Jesus) leaving the temple, followed by the prediction of its destruction. However, all of this, in Schweizer's perspective, is only the introduction to the main concern of Matthew, the warning to the community which begins in 24:3ff.

This analysis of Schweizer is an important contribution to the understanding of the intention of Matthew 23. It shows that chap. 23 stands in the context of chaps. 21-25 as recording Jesus' verdict of guilty against Israel. It also includes the "sentence" and the "execution of the sentence". However, it is more than simply an explanation of Israel's demise as the people of God; it also embraces an implicit warning to the Christian community. This warning is explicit only in vv. 8-12, but it may be regarded as permeating the purpose of Matthew 23.⁷⁵

THE STRUCTURE OF MATTHEW 23

The structure of Matthew 23 has generated wide disagreement among scholars, and it has been assumed in this study that structure is a key to interpretation. Consequently, the structure of chap. 23 needs to be clarified. There is no disagreement in outlining vv. 1-12 as one unity within the chap. and no problem in identifying v. 13 as the beginning of another section. There is a conflict of opinion in defining the limits of the woes and in deciding how the remaining verses of the chapter relate to the rest. The problem is caused by the fact that the seventh woe has a clear beginning in v. 29 but no

⁷⁵ In the parable of the Wicked Tenants, 21:33-46, designated as "the sentence" against Israel, Schweizer noted in *Matthew*, p. 415, that there is also a concern to warn the church: "Much as Matthew is thinking of the transfer of the Kingdom from Israel to the new people of God, his emphasis on the production of fruits always confronts this new people with the question, are they really bearing fruit?". The threats of judgment against Israel are repeated by Matthew as warnings to the community; cf. 3:8-10; 8:12; 23:33; and 7:19; 13:42 and 24:51.

clear ending.⁷⁶ As a result, outlines vary widely over vv. 31-36 and 37-39.⁷⁷

It is proposed that vv. 1-12 and 13-28 be treated as unities and that the seventh woe should be considered the beginning of the concluding section which ends in 24:2. It might be argued that this breaks up the round number of seven woes. However, Filson has pointed out that Matthew's "prefixing of topically related material has as its results that the discourse as a whole has no numerical or symmetrical pattern".⁷⁸ Matthew had a preference for round sacred numbers, but he also could destroy literary form when his intention and material required it.⁷⁹ Matthew 23:28 forms an appropriate conclusion to the first six woes, while v. 29 introduces a sudden shift in the charges to the very direct accusation of murder. This is the nexus which binds the remaining verses together along with the indication of its punishment. The justification for this division can only be fully dealt with in the exegesis that follows.

⁷⁶ Ernst Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu. Eine Erklärung des Markus-Evangeliums und der kanonischen Parallelen*, p. 427.

⁷⁷ Cf. the various outlines of McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 329; Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p. 223; Fenton, *Matthew*, p. 364; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p. 333; Stagg, "Matthew", p. 210; Ellis, *Matthew*, p. 79; and Goulder, *Midrash*, p. 420.

⁷⁸ Floyd V. Filson, "Broken Patterns in the Gospel of Matthew", *JBL*, LXXV:230, 1956.

⁷⁹ Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 294.

CHAPTER TWO

MATTHEW 23:1-12

The second chapter will deal with the first part of Matthew 23, vv. 1-12. Major attention will focus on the significance of the audience identified in 23:1, the combination of the scribes and Pharisees in 23:2, and the intention of the command in vv. 2-3 in light of its immediate context. The closing verses, 8-12, are judged to be a key to the Matthean purpose and not a momentary diversion; and they will be interpreted with this in mind.

THE AUDIENCE OF MATTHEW 23

Baird's recent study on the significance of the audience in the gospel narratives has called attention to a neglected factor which can facilitate interpretation.¹ He has shown that the evangelists were intensely interested in identifying the audience that surrounded Jesus at any given moment, calculating that 98% of the approximately 352 individual logia of Jesus and 94% of the 422 separate units isolated by the Huck-Lietzmann synopsis contain an audience identification—the evangelists believed that the message of Jesus was audience-centered.² Baird's thesis centered on the striking agreement and continuity of the gospels in the identification of an audience which he believed must have preceded the evangelists. However, when it can be shown that the audience-identifier is due to the evangelist himself, this may give some intimation of his intention and understanding of the material which follows.

The Audience-Identifier in Matthew 23:1

The audience-identifier in Matthew 23:1 is particularly arresting because the discourse, which mostly castigates the scribes and Pharisees, apparently is not addressed to them at all, but to the crowds and the disciples. As has already been noted, the setting of Matthew 23 fundamentally differs from that of the Lucan woes which are delivered

¹ Cf. J. Arthur Baird, *Audience Criticism and the Historical Jesus*, pp. 17-19, for a brief history of audience criticism.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

in the home of a Pharisee. To a lesser extent, but significantly, Matthew also differs from the identification of the audience in the Markan parallel. In Matthew 23:1, Jesus addresses the ὄχλοι and the μαθηταί; in Mark 12:37b, the great throng (ὁ πολὺς ὄχλος) heard him gladly. In Luke 20:45, Jesus spoke to the 'disciples in the hearing of all the people (ἀκούοντος παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ). These differences are not decisive by any means, but Matthew 23:1 shows positive signs of being the composition of the evangelist which in turn intimates that the audience-identifier may reflect a special redactional interest on his part.³ In addition to this, one cannot simply assume that Matthew adopted the situation of a discourse to a crowd from his Markan source⁴ because the ὄχλοι, as opposed to Mark's ὁ πολὺς ὄχλος, play an augmented role in Matthew that is unique among the Synoptics.⁵ The presence of the disciples also appears to be a deliberate insertion.⁶ Since both "the crowds" and "the disciples" have a distinctive prominence in the gospel, their combination in 23:1 may be a significant clue for understanding Matthew's intention in this discourse.⁷

³ So Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus*, p. 333, n. 2; Pierre Bonnard, *L'Évangile selon Saint Matthieu*, p. 334; Sjef van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew*, p. 163; and Hubert Frankemölle, *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi. Studien zur Form und Traditionsgeschichte des "Evangeliums" nach Matthäus*, p. 352. Distinctive Matthean elements in 23:1 are the use of τότε, Mt. 20/Mk. 6/Lk. 15; ὁ Ἰησοῦς as an introduction, Mt. 38/Mk. 11/Lk. 2; λαλέω + dative in the sense of a discourse, Mt. 13/Mk. 4/Lk. 7; and the plural ὄχλοι, Mt. 30/Mk. 1/Lk. 16.

⁴ So Werner Georg Kümmel, "Die Weherufe über die Schriftgelehrten und Phariseer (Matthäus 23, 13-36)", *Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament?*, p. 135.

⁵ Cf. Paul S. Minear, "The Disciples and the Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew", *ATR*, Suppl. Ser. III, pp. 28-44, 1974; "Audience Criticism and Markan Ecclesiology", *Neues Testament und Geschichte. Historisches Geschehen und Deutung im Neuen Testament. Oscar Cullmann zum 70. Geburtstag*, pp. 78-89; and "Jesus Audiences, According to Luke", *NovT*, XVI:80-109, 1974. Cf. also James M. Gibbs, "Purpose and Pattern in Matthew's Use of the Title 'Son of David'", *NTS*, X:464, 1964; Jack Dean Kingsbury, *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13: A Study in Redaction-Criticism*, pp. 24-28; and van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp. 142-165.

⁶ So Erich Klostermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, p. 181; T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, p. 228; Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, p. 333; Wilfred L. Knox, *The Sources of the Synoptic Gospels*, I:127, n. 1; Wilhelm Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen der Redaktion von Matthäus 23", *Orientierung an Jesus. Zur Theologie der Synoptiker. Für Josef Schmid*, p. 287; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, p. 437; and Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p. 99, n. 87.

⁷ Minear, "Disciples and Crowds", p. 32, noted that "the crowds" appear either at the beginning or at the close of every sermon in Matthew, although they are not always present to hear what is said.

The significance of the ὄχλοι. Minear reached the conclusion, in his illuminating study of “the crowds” in Matthew, that they are not “heterogenous and anonymous bystanders, with a casual and shifting constituency”, an idea that is easily acquired from the various translations of ὄχλοι in the Revised Standard Version (“crowd”, “throng”, “multitude”, and “people”).⁸ According to Minear, “far from being an amorphous and neutral category, the *ochloi* played a highly positive role as followers of Jesus, accepting his prophetic authority and accompanying him from the beginning to the end of his career”.⁹ This has been recognized by others, but the role of “the crowds” in Matthew deserves reemphasis.

First of all, “the crowds” follow (ἀκολουθεῖν) Jesus (4:25; 8:1; 12:15 [although “crowds” is omitted in many mss.], 14:13; 15:30 [προσέρχασθαι], 19:2; 20:29; and 21:9).¹⁰ Second, they witness and confirm the miracles of Jesus (8:1-4; 9:1-8, 32-33; 12:22-30; 15:30-31; 17:14-18; and 20:29-34). Third, they stand in direct contrast to the intransigent Jewish leaders. “The crowds” testify enthusiastically to Jesus, recognizing that he has an air of authority surpassing that of scribes, calling him a prophet, identifying him (although cautiously) as the son of David, and giving glory to God for his mighty works: “Never was anything like this seen in Israel” (7:28; 9:8, 33; 12:23; 15:31; 21:8-11, 46; and 22:33). The Jewish leaders, on the other hand, see in Jesus only a son of Beelzebul and a blasphemer who usurps the authority of God (9:3, 24; 12:24; and 21:15-16). They constantly strive to quench the gullible zeal of “the crowds”. “The crowds” are clearly divorced from the Jewish leaders when Matthew passes on the tradition that the fear of “the crowds” deterred their seizure of Jesus (21:46; cf. also, 14:5 and 21:26). Fourth, “the crowds” have been witnesses of Jesus’ dispute with the Jewish leaders throughout the gospel (9:18; 12:22-32; 15:1-20; 21:10-17, 23-27; and 22:23-33). Thus, it is fitting that they are also present when

⁸ Ibid., p. 28.

⁹ Ibid., p. 31. Matthew has inserted the ὄχλοι when he is apparently following Mark and when they are absent in Mark’s narrative in Mt. 4:25; 7:28; 8:1; 13:34, 36; 14:5; 21:8, 9, 11; and 22:33.

¹⁰ Ἀκολουθεῖν has a qualitative function in 8:19-22; 10:38-39; 16:24; and 19:21, 27, but this is not necessarily applicable to “the crowds” because this word can designate simply movement from one place to another as in 9:27; 14:13; and 26:58. Where it clearly has a qualitative function, “the disciples” are involved; thus, it is hazardous to assume that “the crowds” follow Jesus in the same manner as “the disciples”.

Jesus denounces these leaders in chap. 23. Finally, “the crowds”, as Minear has observed, were the objects of Jesus’ ministry in all of its aspects: healing, preaching, and teaching (4:23; 9:35-38; 10:6; 12:15, 46; 14:14; 15:24, 30, 32; and cf. also, 11:1-6).¹¹

Granting the unparalleled significance of “the crowds” in Matthew, the immediate question is whether or not they have any more significance in 23:1 than merely as a versatile prop for the staging of Jesus’ condemnation of the Jewish leaders. Minear has answered affirmatively, and his answer deserves consideration. For the first time in Matthew, “the crowds” and “the disciples” are unequivocally addressed together and on the same level in a discourse; but the significance of the crowds at this point can only be clarified by first taking a look at Matthew’s conception of “the disciples”.

The significance of the μαθηταί. Minear is convinced that the disciples have a unique connection with the crowds in the scheme of Matthew—they are to become the shepherds of a scattered flock, the new tenants of an unprofitable vineyard (cf. 9:36; 10:6).¹² The disciples should be distinguished as carefully from “the crowds” as “the crowds” should be distinguished carefully from the Jewish leaders. In contrast to “the crowds”, the disciples’ manner of life requires special sacrifices. They have been given unique vocational tasks and special authority to accomplish these tasks. According to Minear, the disciples have a role corresponding to and in competition with that of the scribes and Pharisees.¹³ It is a vital element of Minear’s thesis that “the disciples” were understood by Matthew to be Jesus’ delegates (cf. 10:1-28 and 28:16-20) and as the replacements of the scribes and Pharisees. Concerning the audience-identifier in 23:1, Minear insightfully observed:

It is highly significant that even the woes against the scribes and the lament over Jerusalem are placed by Jesus in the context of teachings addressed simultaneously to the crowds and disciples. By this device Matthew is surely warning the *mathetai* of his own day against multiple forms of hypocrisy ... The *ochloi*, however, are also involved as men whose fate depends on whether their guides are blind or not. Moreover, they can readily corrupt their guides with uncritical subservience. It is their entry into the Kingdom of Heaven (23:13) which is Jesus’ ultimate concern.¹⁴

¹¹ Minear, “Disciples and Crowds”, p. 31.

¹² Ibid., p. 32.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 37-38.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 35-36.

The inclusion of "the disciples" in the audience would then signify to Minear that the discourse in chap. 23 had a pedagogical function.¹⁵ "The disciples" as leaders are susceptible to the same spiritual cataracts that blinded the scribes and Pharisees. Therefore, the immediate concern in chap. 23 is the instruction of "the disciples", but Minear goes further to say that the ultimate concern is the disciples' guidance of "the crowds".¹⁶ This is one of Minear's provisional conclusions about the relationship of the crowds and disciples:

The basic conflict between Jesus and his adversaries issued from this concern of God for Israel, his flock. Will the *ochloi* remain under the care and authority of the Pharisees and their scribes, or will their loyalties shift over to Jesus and his *mathetai*, his scribes (23:34)? Matthew assumes that the answer to that question depends primarily on the faithfulness of the *mathetai* to their commission as teachers.¹⁷

Implicit in this conclusion is the assumption that Matthew intends "the crowds" to signify contemporary laymen; and "the disciples", contemporary leaders who now serve as stewards of Christ's household.¹⁸ Although the latter assumption may be correct, "the crowds" should not be seen as the lay members of Matthew's church (who are referred to as the μικροί or παῖδιά, cf. 18:6) nor as the contemporary Jewish crowds who are bordering on commitment to Christ,¹⁹ but

¹⁵ Paul S. Minear, "False Prophecy and Hypocrisy in the Gospel of Matthew", *Neues Testament und Kirche. Für Rudolf Schnackenburg*, p. 91. This has not gone unnoticed by others. Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 287, claimed that the inclusion of the disciples makes chap. 23 more than simply an anti-rabbinic woe discourse; it has universal ramifications for the church. Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 437, noted that Matthew wanted to summon the church to proper conduct. Cf. n. 89, below.

¹⁶ Minear, "Disciples and Crowds", p. 32.

¹⁷ Ibid. van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp. 160-163, also recognized a special intermediary function of "the disciples" in Matthew who are to bring the crowds to a fulfillment of the will of the father; cf. 5:1-2; 14:13-21; and 15:32-39. However, in 23:1 he saw no further indication about the mutual relationship between "the disciples" and "the crowds". On the special role of the disciples in Matthew, cf. further, Robert P. Meye, *Jesus and the Twelve*, pp. 93-99, 216-217 and 229.

¹⁸ Minear, "Disciples and Crowds", p. 41.

¹⁹ Gibbs, "Purpose and Pattern", p. 450, saw "the crowds" as the mass of common people moving toward recognition of Jesus and who will later be called the church. Cf. also J. C. Fenton, *Saint Matthew*, p. 197; and H. Benedict Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 188. van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp. 160-161, believed that Matthew was reading back his own experiences into history. He approached "the crowds" positively because so many of "the crowds" (Gentiles) accepted Jesus in his own day. Peter F. Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind and Message*, p. 79, understood "the crowds" to signify those Jews in Matthew's day tending toward Christianity. They could not yet make up their minds about leaving Judaism and the leadership of the Jamnian Pharisees. Kingsbury, *Parables*, p. 25, maintained that Matthew was referring only to the Jews of Jesus' day.

rather they should be understood as the Jewish crowds under the leadership of the scribes and Pharisees in the time of Jesus. Matthew is not reinterpreting “the crowds” from the vantage point of his own church situation but is reflecting upon the history of the people of Israel.

Matthew's understanding of the ὄχλοι. The movement of charges in chap. 23 suggests that Matthew is interpreting for his church the hardness which came upon the people of Israel. There is a subtle progression from the castigation of the leaders of Judaism, personified in the scribes and Pharisees, to the implication of all Israel, including “the crowds” of 23:1 (“you”, “this generation”, “Jerusalem”, “the children of Jerusalem”), who together have turned a deaf ear to God’s messengers and persecuted them. The fact is that in Matthew “the crowds” are on the brink of acknowledging Jesus as God’s son, but they have not yet been completely won over to faith in Jesus (cf. 18:6). They do follow, marvel, and praise; but their highest praise, that Jesus is the son of David (21:15-16), is shown in 22:41-46 to be inadequate—Jesus is David’s Lord.²⁰ At no point do “the crowds” recognize Jesus as Lord or as the son of God in Matthew’s gospel. To be sure, the Jewish leaders are more culpable for their rejection of Jesus; but “the crowds” will also be judged if they cast in their lot with the blind guides. Both will plunge into the pit.²¹ From 21:1 on, “the crowds” are no longer seen in a positive light but are shown to have sided with the authorities against Jesus. In the passion narrative, “the crowds” become the pawns of the malevolent leaders (27:20; cf. Mk. 15:11).

One might argue that in the passion narrative Matthew is simply adhering to the received tradition in his reference to “the crowds”. It is the ὄχλος πολὺς (from Mark) who come with swords and clubs with the Jewish leaders to arrest Jesus (26:47; Mk. 14:43; and Lk. 22:47), but the ὄχλοι appear in 26:55. In 27:15-26 (cf. 27:20

²⁰ Gibbs, “Purpose and Pattern”, p. 464, claimed that Matthew expressly dismissed the title “son of David” in light of the recognition of Jesus as “son of God”. Cf. Frank Stagg, “Matthew”, *BBC*, VII:210; and Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, pp. 101-103. The disciples never confess Jesus to be the “son of David” in Matthew.

²¹ The destiny of the Jewish leaders is not separate from that of Israel. Cf. Douglas R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 151. The relatively innocent must suffer also. This would explain Matthew’s stringent demands for the leaders of the church not to fail in their responsibility toward the “little ones”.

and Mk. 15:11), they call for the release of Barabbas and the crucifixion of Jesus; and "the crowds" of 27:20 become πᾶς ὁ λαός in 27:25 when they accept responsibility for Jesus' blood. It is unlikely that Matthew was attempting to exonerate the ὄχλοι in some way by changing the noun to λαός.²² Instead, Matthew has shown his ministry to the Jewish people running full circle. Jesus began his public ministry in 4:23 by healing the λαός; the λαός end his public ministry in 27:25 by demanding his death. Taking the entire gospel into account, the ὄχλοι eventually sided with the wrong camp. Matthew accurately reflects the history of the Jews. During Jesus' ministry many people followed and were on the verge of commitment, but the Jewish leaders prevailed. How else can the crucifixion and the increasingly Gentile composition of the church be explained? The Pharisees did, in fact, win over the broad masses of the Jewish people.²³ This, Matthew, the Christian, considered to be a tragedy which he outlined in the portrayal of "the crowds" during Jesus' ministry.

Conclusion

Provisional conclusions may now be drawn from the analysis of the audience-identifier in 23:1. First, the inclusion of the disciples would tend to indicate that Matthew conceived the discourse to be a warning to the disciple leaders of his own church. Second, the inclusion of "the crowds" represents those who were ultimately dis-

²² Gibbs, "Purpose and Pattern", p. 451, wrote: "Apart from the effect of emphasizing the number of people involved, it appears that Matthew employs οἱ ὄχλοι instead of ὁ λαός to emphasize the gulf between the masses and the Pharisees, and only when οἱ ὄχλοι fully stand at the end with the Jewish leaders in condemning Jesus (27:20-22), are they finally equated with ὁ λαός (27:25) (and so aligned with the Pharisaic party)". Cf. also Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit. Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus*, p. 107. Against this, cf. Alfred Suhl, "Der Davidssohn im Matthäus-Evangelium", *ZNW*, LIX:81, 1968; and van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp. 158-160.

Joseph Fitzmyer, "Anti-Semitism and Matthew 27:25", *TS*, XXVI:669, 1965, has shown that ὁ λαός is used by Matthew with generally an ethnic connotation. It is found in the context of O.T. prophecies (2:6; 4:16; 13:15; and 15:8). It is used in the genitive case for the "leaders of the people" (2:4; 21:23; 26:3, 47; and 27:1, 3). It occurs on the lips of the Jewish leaders (26:5 and 27:64); and with the exception of 1:21 when the angel addresses Joseph, the only other occurrence of the word is when Jesus acts to heal the people in 4:23, and they act to kill Jesus in 27:25.

²³ Rudolf Meyer, "ὄχλος", *TDNT*, V:590. Josephus, *Ant.* XIII:298 is suspect on this matter; see the explanation of Morton Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century", *Israel: Its Role in Civilization*, pp. 74-78.

sualed from their initial impulse to follow Jesus by their false leaders and have consequently become participants in their guilt. The disciples are, therefore, warned in this discourse not to go the way of Israel and of the consequences if they should fail in their responsibility toward the sheep, as the Jewish leaders failed in theirs.

THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

The combination of the scribes and Pharisees in 23:2, 13, 15, 23, 25, 27 and 29 attracts little notice, but it may be attributable to the redaction of Matthew. If this is so, it must be determined what if any significance should be attached to this combination.

The Scribes and Pharisees as a Matthean Combination

The first indication that “the scribes and Pharisees” is Matthew’s own combination is the evidence of the Lucan woes which retain a distinction between the accusations against the Pharisees and those against the lawyers. Jeremias has asserted that Luke’s tradition has accurately preserved the historical distinction between the scribes and Pharisees that is often obscured in the gospels.²⁴ The scribes (lawyers) were reproached for abuses naturally associated with their theological education and social standing: they imposed strict laws (Lk. 11:46); they honored prophets of days gone by while condemning God’s messengers sent to them (11:47-48); they kept their learning secret so that others were excluded from its benefits and did not even make use of it themselves (11:52). Jeremias considered 11:43 (on inordinate pride in dress and solicitude for protocol) as also pertaining to the scribes (as correctly in Lk. 20:46), but here it was mistakenly charged to the Pharisees. The other accusations against the Pharisees are quite appropriate for laymen who attempt to abide by the strictest demands of the Law. They are condemned for their failures to fulfill God’s will despite scrupulous attention to matters of purity (11:39-41) and tithes (11:42). Consequently, it may be assumed that Luke preserved an original distinction between the theologians and the devout laymen

²⁴ Joachim Jeremias, “γραμματεὺς”, *TDNT*, I:740-743; and *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, pp. 253-254.

that must surely be attributable to his source.²⁵ If Matthew used the same source, as has been assumed, he totally erased any differentiation between the charges against the scribes and against the Pharisees by joining the two groups together in the address of the woes.²⁶

It is also evident that Matthew has ignored the historical distinction between the scribes and the Pharisees in his prefatory statement in 23:2: "the scribes and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses". This falsely assumes that all lay Pharisees were authoritative interpreters of the Law.²⁷ Not all scribes were Pharisees and not all Pharisees

²⁵ Following Jeremias, cf. also S. Legasse, "Scribes et Disciples de Jesus", *RB*, LXVIII:323-324, 1961; Hans-Friedrich Weiss, *Der Pharisäismus im Lichte der Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments*, pp. 108-109; Reinhart Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium*, p. 15; Kümmel, "Weherufe", p. 138; and Douglas R. A. Hare, *Persecution*, p. 81.

²⁶ So Adolf Harnack, *The Sayings of Jesus: The Second Source of St. Matthew and St. Luke*; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", *ZTK*, XLVIII:49, 1951; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 140; Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, pp. 14-15; Kümmel, "Weherufe", p. 138; Hare, *Persecution*, p. 81; Odil Hannes Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des Deuteronomischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum*, p. 28; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 136; Siegfried Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten*, p. 96; Eduard Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 430; M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, p. 422; Robert Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition*, p. 174; and John P. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew*, p. 111, who terms it "a fixed theological formula". The singular, "blind Pharisee", in 23:26 suggests that the statement on the cleansing of vessels was originally addressed only to the Pharisees as it is in Lk. 11:38-39.

²⁷ The meaning of the term "seat of Moses" is disputed. E. L. Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece*, pp. 57-61, claimed to have shown from his archaeological work that the seat of Moses was a familiar object in the synagogues. He argued that Mt. 23:2 was a simple matter of fact statement, not an abstraction. However, this would not fully explain the imperatives in v.3 which are grounded on the authority implied in v.2. I. Renov, "The Seat of Moses", *IEJ*, V:266, 1955, argued that to be seated on the throne or seat of someone in the O.T. meant "to succeed" them (cf. Exod. 11:5, 12:29; I Kgs. 1:35, 46; 2:12; 16:11; II Kgs. 15:12; and Ps. 132:12; also, Josephus *Ant.* VII:353, VIII:2). Renov infers from this that the phrase in 23:2 means that the scribes were the legal successors of Moses and his authority was transferred to them in unbroken succession. Often cited to support this conclusion is M. Ab. 1:1: "Moses received the Law from Sinai and committed it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the Prophets; and the Prophets committed it to the men of the Great Synagogue". In Sir. 45:15-17, Moses "ordained" Aaron and gave him authority ἐν διαθήκαις κριμάτων to teach Israel. It is, therefore, more likely that the phrase has a metaphorical significance which means that the scribes were responsible for the interpretation of the Law to enlighten Israel rather than referring simply to a piece of furniture in the synagogue. That this is the case is perhaps best illustrated indirectly by the story R. Judah told in the name of Rab (B. *Men.* 29b). When Moses ascended on high he was shown R. Akiba expounding the law. Sitting in a back row, Moses was unable to follow

were scribes.²⁸ The original saying could have referred only to scribes so that for some reason Matthew appears to have added the Pharisees in 23:2.²⁹ This leads to the question whether or not the combination of the scribes and the Pharisees in 23:2 and in the woes had particular significance for Matthew.

The Jewish Leaders in Matthew

Matthew's rather indiscriminate handling of the distinctions between the Jewish leaders throughout the gospel and his frequent insertion of the Pharisees³⁰ into the context caused Weiss to conclude:

... the tendency in Mt. seems to be to diminish the historical distinction which, in respect of the actual relations at the time of Jesus, Mk. and Lk. portray in what they say about His adversaries, and in a simplification of the historical position to make the Pharisees the focal point of the opposition.³¹

the arguments and he became ill at ease. However, when R. Akiba answered the question, "Whence do you know it?" with "It is a law given to Moses at Sinai", he was comforted. Consequently, this statement in 23:2 should be construed as affirming that the scribes have the same authority as Moses. Cf. the interpretation of Ps.-Clem. Hom. III. 70.1-2.

Further examples of the authority of the scribes may be found in such passages as *M. Orl.* 3:9; *Yeb.* 2:4, 9:3; *Kel.* 13:7; *Par.* 11:6; and *Yad.* 3:2. *M. Sanh.* 11:3 contains the statement: "Greater stringency applies to [the observance of] the words of the Scribes than to [the observance of] the words of the [written] Law". Similarly, in *B. Erub.* 21b, Raba is recorded to have said: "Be more careful in [the observance] of the words of the scribes than the words of Torah for in the Law of the Torah there are positive and negative commands; but as to the laws of the Scribes, whoever transgresses any of the enactments of the Scribes incurs the penalty of death". Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Belief*, pp. 353-354, cited several more similar passages, explaining that these were aimed at detractors and were designed to reinforce the oral law. See also the discussion of *M. Ab.* 1:1 by Louis Finkelstein in *New Light From the Prophets*, pp. 77-90.

²⁸ Leo Baeck, *The Pharisees and Other Essays*, pp. 22-23; Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, pp. 236, n. 12, 243; George Foot Moore, *Judaism*, I: 43, 57, 286-287; and Jacob Neusner, *Eliezer Ben Hyrcanus: The Tradition and the Man*, II: 304-306.

²⁹ Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 483, tried to avoid this problem by claiming that the καί ("and the Pharisees") is exegetical and should be translated, "that is, the Pharisees", to identify the scribes as belonging to the party of the Pharisees. Paul Gaechter, *Das Matthäus Evangelium*, p. 723, considered the phrase to be a hendiadys: "scribes of the Pharisees". Both explanations are suspect since they do not account for 23:13ff. and are attempts to explain away a problem. Cf. A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, pp. 758-759 and 786.

³⁰ For statistics cf. Rolf Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium*, p. 17. See Appendix B.

³¹ Hans-Friedrich Weiss, "φαραισαῖος", *TDNT*, IX:39. Cf. also, Alan Hugh McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, pp. 26f.; Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the*

This summarizes the view of many other scholars who have assumed that this anachronistic tendency in Matthew reflects his situation after A.D. 70 when, for example, all the scribes were Pharisees, and that the increasing emphasis on the Pharisees as Jesus' major opponents mirrored the mounting opposition which the Jamnian Pharisees posed for Matthew's church.³² Walker has vigorously argued against this and claimed that Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees, and scribes and Pharisees, etc., were all synonyms.³³ They have become simply a literary convention because Matthew conceived all of the Jewish leaders to be a united front without distinction.³⁴ That Matthew was less than rigorous in maintaining the historical distinctions among the Jewish parties is most apparent in 16:1-12 (cf. 3:7 and Lk. 3:7) where the Pharisees are lumped together with the Sadducees, and their teaching collectively rejected as if it were coincident.³⁵

The recent study on the Jewish leaders in Matthew by van Tilborg has largely confirmed Walker's argument that Matthew treated all of them as a homogeneous group, making little or no distinction

Synoptic Tradition, pp. 54-56; G. D. Kilpatrick, *Origins of the Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 106; Wolfgang Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel. Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums*, pp. 90f.; Strecker, *Der Weg*, pp. 149f.; and Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, pp. 12-14.

³² So Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p. 113; F. W. Beare, *The Earliest Records of Jesus*, pp. 214-215; Weiss, *Der Pharissäismus*, pp. 108-109. Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 31; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, pp. 451-452; O. Lamar Cope, *Matthew, A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven*, pp. 126-127; Meier, *Law*, pp. 15, n. 86, 112. W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 292, asserted that the juxtaposition of the church and the Pharisees grew out of a special living concern of Matthew. Cf. Hare, *Persecution*, pp. 168-169.

The intensity of Matthew's anti-Pharisaism is clearly a product of the redactional elements of the gospel. For this reason, it is often concluded that this vitriolic attack must stem from current tensions between Matthew's church and Pharisaic Judaism (the *Birkath ha Minim* usually is pinpointed as the primary issue); or that it reflects a bitter harking back to recent history. But a look at the synoptic gospels shows that the gospel of Luke was just as bitter in its criticism of the Pharisees, and they are singled out for condemnation more often in Luke than in Matthew (see Appendix B). On the same grounds that it is argued for Matthew, it may be concluded that Pharisaic Judaism was a living concern for Luke's church. However, few have chosen to adopt this conclusion.

³³ Walker, *Heilsgeschichte*, p. 20.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9; cf. pp. 11-29.

³⁵ Cf. Rudolf Meyer, *Tradition und Neuschöpfung im antiken Judentum. Dargestellt an der Geschichte des Pharissäismus*, p. 59; and Ellis Rivkin, "Defining the Pharisees: The Tannaitic Sources", *HUCA*, XL-XLI: 205-249, 1969-1970.

between Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, high priests and elders.³⁶ Walker is certainly correct in his criticism of Hummel (cf. also Weiss) that the Pharisees were not the only opponents of Jesus in Matthew, and they are not always made the focal point of opposition. Yet there is no denying that the Pharisees do receive a greater prominence in Matthew.³⁷ This means that Matthew was either oblivious to the historical niceties which separated the various groups because he was uninformed, or because he was consciously or unconsciously reflecting the situation of his own time, or because he no longer considered the distinctions to have any further significance.³⁸ Sand seems to be correct when he notes that Matthew was not attempting to portray the contemporary leaders of Judaism by historicizing the gospel accounts; he was much more concerned with presenting the entire process of the history of Israel whose leaders had always been false (cf. Acts 7:51). In this case, they had failed to acclaim the messiah and had brought final disaster upon the nation.³⁹ Consequently, all the leaders of the Jews have been stereotyped as false, mostly under the rubric of Pharisees. In 23:2 it was not just the

³⁶ van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp. 1-6. van Tilborg, p. 29, further identified the Pharisees as moral types: "The Pharisees are not taken as a historical group by Mt., but as types of evil: they represent the wrong choice". This echoes the earlier opinion of Georg Strecker, "The Concept of History in Matthew", *JAAR*, XXV:225-226, 1967, who claimed that the Pharisees do not reflect contemporary Judaism, but rather have the function of a "topos". They represent the attitude of unbelief and iniquity in contrast to the ethical demand placed upon the disciple. Lloyd Gaston, "The Messiah of Israel as Teacher of the Gentiles", *Int.* XXIX:34, 1975, concurred, writing: "It is more likely that the Matthean Pharisees are a theological construct for 'that generation' and that if there is any present application it is to a phenomenon within his own congregation". Kingsbury, *Matthew*, Proclamation Commentaries, p. 8, maintained similarly: "Matthew is not concerned to distinguish historically, in terms of the days of Jesus, between particular factions of the leaders of Israel; instead, they all have become for him representatives of a monolithic front that stands implacably opposed to Jesus. Hence, the way in which Matthew deals with Israelite leaders of whatever stripe is governed by the theological dictum that they are the epitome of this 'evil and adulterous generation'".

³⁷ Cf. Appendix B.

³⁸ Weiss, "φαρισαῖος", p. 38.

³⁹ Alexander Sand, *Das Gesetz und die Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Evangeliums nach Matthäus*, pp. 81-82. He wrote: "Die Gemeinde des Matthäus hat sich innerlich vom Judentum rabbinischer Prägung schon gelöst und die Diskussion um 'Gesetz und Propheten' hat bereits so sehr grundsätzlichen Charakter angenommen, dass die repräsentativen Gruppen des zeitgenössischen Judentums nicht so sehr die aktuell agierende, als vielmehr die im Gesamtprozess der Geschichte Israels schon immer das falsche Verhalten repräsentierende Führungsschicht Israels darstellt".

scribes who were at fault, but the scribes and Pharisees who together represented the genus, false leaders of Israel.

MATTHEW 23:2-12

Matthew 23:2-7 has posed a knotty problem for interpretation, particularly as it relates to Matthew's intention. Our attention will focus mostly on the significance of vv. 2-4 while assuming that the concluding verses, 8-12, are perhaps the most important for unpacking the editor's intention in vv. 2-12. Their christological and ecclesiological overtones will be dealt with as they reveal Matthew's chief concerns.

Matthew 23:2-7

After reading of Jesus' rancorous conflict with the Pharisees to this point in the gospel, the statement in 23:2-3 ("the scribes and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses; therefore, all things, whatever they say to you, do and keep") is startling. This appears to be a sweeping acknowledgment that the scribes and Pharisees are sanctioned as interpreters of the Law⁴⁰ and that their interpretation, with all of its amplifications, is authoritative for the disciples and the crowds. This is unexpected and disconcerting because it is the only place in Matthew where it is possible to construe the Jewish leaders in a positive light. It also directly contradicts the position of Jesus expressly portrayed in 15:1-20, when he challenged their "traditions" (cf. 15:14: "ignore them", and 19:3-9), and in 16:5-12, when he warned against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which is specifically identified in v. 12 as *their teaching* (without synoptic parallel) for those disciples slow to comprehend. Taken at face value, vv. 2-3 strangely contradict the presumed attitude of Jesus toward the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees (cf. Mk. 2:23-27 and 7:1-23) as well as the redactional contributions of Matthew. Matthew 28:16-20, the climactic key to the gospel, contains the disciples' mandate to teach what Jesus taught (not what Moses or the scribes and Pharisees taught) in a universal mission which is free from a basic tenet of Pharisaic teaching, circumcision. The advice in 23:3 is also fraught with danger if the scribes and Pharisees are truly the blind guides Matthew claims they are (15:14; 23:16, 24). The puzzle has generated many attempts at solution.

⁴⁰ See above, n. 26.

Καθίζειν. Some scholars have focused on the verb ἐκάθισαν as a key to the solution. The ever convenient aorist tense has been invoked as one possible explanation. It has been claimed that Matthew was writing vv. 2-3 from his own standpoint and so used the aorist tense, “they sat”, to look back upon a period of time which is now past. To capture the intention the verse should be translated: “Formerly, the scribes and Pharisees used to sit ...”.⁴¹ Two things militate against this interpretation. First, it ignores the imperatives in v. 3a which are grounded on the statement in v. 2. The imperatives imply that they are still in a position of authority. Second, if this interpretation for the aorist of καθίζειν was applied rigorously throughout the New Testament, it would raise an even more vexing question about the current status of Jesus who “formerly sat” at the right hand of God (cf. Mk. 16:19; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12 and Rev. 3:21).⁴² The *Aktionsart* of the aorist tense is a shaky foundation on which to build an explanation of vv. 2-3. Consequently, Black has argued that the aorist in 23:2 “defies analysis on Greek lines” and, following a suggestion of Wellhausen, has claimed that it must be based upon a semitic stative perfect expressing a general truth.⁴³ However, one need not resort to translation Greek to explain the use of the aorist since it is the nondescriptive tense which can cover linear action (when it is not intended to be stressed) as well as punctiliar.⁴⁴ The context indicates that v. 2 can only mean that the scribes and Pharisees now sit on the seat of Moses.

There are three more viable proposals for understanding the basic meaning of “they sit” as expressing a general truth: 1) to take it at face value, however unexpected, as a concession to the Pharisaic

⁴¹ W. C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, p. 244; and Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology*, p. 402, n. 1. McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 329, also allows this as a possibility.

⁴² Cf. van Tilborg, p. 134.

⁴³ Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, p. 128, followed by Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 483. Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Syntax*, III: 72, described ἐκάθισαν as a perfective aorist but possibly a Hebraism. In *Style*, IV:33, he comes down on the side of the Hebraism whereby the aorist was unconsciously substituted for the Hebrew stative perfect. Jehoshua M. Grintz, “Hebrew as the Spoken and Written Language in the Last Days of the Second Temple”. *JBL*, LXXIV:39, 1960, thought that a Hebrew frequentative imperfect was misunderstood by the translator and rendered as a perfect. W. H. Moulton and W. F. Howard, *Grammar*, II:458, identified ἐκάθισαν as an ingressive aorist; while Robertson, *Grammar*, dubbed it a gnomic aorist. Maximillian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, §256, claimed the latter designation covered up the difficulty rather than solved it.

⁴⁴ Cf. Frank Stagg, “The Abused Aorist”, *JBL*, XCI:231, 1972.

interpretation of the Law as formulated in the academies,⁴⁵ 2) to consider it as implying a presumption on the part of the scribes and Pharisees for assuming this position,⁴⁶ or, 3) to interpret it as an ironic exaggeration.⁴⁷ These alternatives can only be appraised by careful attention to the context. Immediately, the second alternative is ruled out as improbable because one would then expect to find in v. 3: "therefore, pay no attention to what they say".⁴⁸ The imperatives "do" and "keep" give no hint of usurpation on the part of the scribes and Pharisees. This leaves alternatives one and three as the only serious possibilities.

Πάντα. The view that Jesus (and Matthew) is granting authority to the scribes and Pharisees is made more palatable by interpreting πάντα in v. 3a in a limited sense. The disciples are to heed them only insofar as they expound the Law of Moses, and v. 3 does not apply to their casuistic expansions.⁴⁹ Against this possibility is the fact that the use of πᾶς is redactional in Matthew in the context of νόμος, ἐντολαί, and δικαιοσύνη (3:15; 5:18; and 28:20: πάντα ὅσα);⁵⁰ and, as Banks has argued: "the close connection with v. 2

⁴⁵ So Günther Bornkamm, "End-Expectation and Church in Matthew", *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, pp. 21 and 24; Weiss, "φαρισαῖος", p. 43; Asher Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth*, pp. 130-131; and Goulder, *Midrash*, p. 151.

⁴⁶ A. Marx, *Das Evangelium Matthäus*, p. 321, according to Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 175; Moulton and Howard, *Grammar*, II:458; and Theodor Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus*, p. 641. The *New American Standard Version* assumes this position in its translation: "The scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses....".

⁴⁷ Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus*, p. 210.

⁴⁸ Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, p. 314.

⁴⁹ Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 40, maintained that by linking it to Moses, Matthew restricts the application of v. 3a to the exposition of the Law and not their embellishments. Cf. also Allen, *Matthew*, p. 244; Plummer, *Matthew*, p. 314; Ned B. Stonehouse, *The Witness of Matthew and Mark to Christ*, pp. 196-197; Adolf Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus*, p. 664; W. D. Davies, *Setting*, p. 106; and Gerhard Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law", *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, p. 86. Kingsbury, *Matthew*, Proclamation Commentaries, pp. 85-86, believed that Matthew's church complied with the Pharisaic tradition to a certain extent as long as it did not contravene God's will as articulated by Jesus.

Hubert Grimme, "Ein Herrenwort bei Matthäus in neuer Beleuchtung", *BZ*, XXIII: 175-176, 1935-1936, claimed that πάντα ὅσα was a mistranslation of a Hebrew conjunction which should have been rendered "insofar as".

⁵⁰ Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p. 288. This also accords with the pattern in the O.T. concerning the commands of the Law (Lev. 18:5; Deut. 6:2; Josh. 1:8; II Chron. 33:8; 35:19 LXX; and Neh. 10:29). For the evidence of Matthew's possible redaction of v. 3, cf. van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 136.

rather stresses the authority possessed by the scribes and Pharisees, and this cannot be artificially restricted to that teaching which was a faithful interpretation of the Law'.⁵¹ This interpretation of "all things" leaves unanswered the question of just who is to decide when the scribes and Pharisees are faithful in the interpretation of the Law and what criteria are to be used. It ignores the subtle evidence in Matthew that there are Christian counterparts to the scribes who have taken over the exegetical authority of the Jewish scribes (13:52; 23:34; 16:19; and 18:18). It ignores the explicit evidence throughout the gospel, and particularly in 23:10, that Jesus is the final and only authority for the church. The word must be permitted its unlimited meaning, "all things"; yet a blanket endorsement of the authority of the scribes and Pharisees cannot be Matthew's intention.⁵²

The context of Matthew 23:2-3. Verses 2-3 cannot be understood apart from what follows.⁵³ Careful attention must be paid to v. 4 which immediately follows. There are basically two alternatives for understanding Matthew's purpose in inserting v. 4 after vv. 2-3:⁵⁴

⁵¹ Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 175.

⁵² Meier, *Law*, p. 27, observed that Matthew cannot be justifiably accused of a "sloppy, eclectic or schizophrenic juxtaposition of contradictory material". He argued well his thesis that in the gospel Matthew has consciously ordered "an economy of salvation". He subsumed "recalcitrant Jewish Christian material by means of his schema of salvation-history". There are two horizons or levels of meaning which are determinative: the sacred past of the earthly Jesus and the present rule of the son of man over his church (p. 30, n. 13). He went on to argue that 23:2-3 is only intelligible in Matthew's theology if it applies only to the sacred past of Jesus' ministry (cf. pp. 106; 119, n. 189; 156), and he urged caution in immediately referring material in chap. 23 to the present state and practice of Matthew's church. This is certainly true that 23:2-3 can not apply for Matthew's community without raising serious questions; however, Meier fails to explain why Matthew included this material at this point.

Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, pp. 334-335, thought that v. 3 had to do with their judicial authority in questions of infringement and preservation of the Law in civil matters. The disciples should give obedience to their judgments in such cases (cf. Deut. 17:10-11). However, Finkel, *The Pharisees*, p. 139, gives evidence that civil judgments were in the hands of local administrators, not the Pharisees. The academies were concerned only with the structure of the Pharisaic code of observances. Cf. Urbach, *The Sages*, pp. 593, 606.

⁵³ This seems to be the key mistake which Bornkamm makes in his assessment of 23:2-3 in *Tradition and Interpretation*, p. 21.

⁵⁴ It is much more probable that Matthew altered what was originally a woe in Q, dropping the woe address and changing it to the third person and inserting it at this point, than that Luke altered the saying into a woe in order to maintain a certain sequence of woes. So Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 40; Beilner, *Christus und die Phariseer*, p. 202; Schulz, *Q*, pp. 106-107; Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 175; and

this logion was considered to be well-suited as an example of the assertion in 23:3b (“they say and do not do”);⁵⁵ or Matthew included v. 4 to modify the force of the affirmation in vv. 2-3.⁵⁶

If it is maintained that v. 3 does not condemn the regulations of the scribes and Pharisees but only focuses on their conduct (v. 3b), there would appear to be a contradiction in v. 4 when it is said that “they tie up heavy burdens (φορτία βαρέα)⁵⁷ and lay them on men’s shoulders”.⁵⁸ It is only natural to think of “the heavy burdens” in terms of the aggregate demands of the rabbinic proliferation of the Law.⁵⁹ This would in turn imply that the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law has become an impossible burden; and if the Law has become an impossible burden, it would also imply that its interpretation is misdirected.⁶⁰ The image is continued in v. 4b, αὐτοὶ δὲ τῷ δακτύλῳ αὐτῶν οὐ θέλουσιν κινῆσαι αὐτά. This means that either the Pharisees will not move the load in the sense of lifting

Green, *Matthew*, p. 189. Sand, *Das Gesetz*, p. 88, suggests that it is possible that Mt. 23:4 and Luke 11:46 was a logion passed on in two different traditions, but this would be a surprising coincidence.

⁵⁵ So Schulz, *Q*, pp. 106-107.

⁵⁶ So Green, *Matthew*, p. 189.

⁵⁷ There is strong external evidence for including βαρέα καὶ δυσβάστακτα in the text. However, it is absent in a striking variety of witnesses, and this suggests an interpolation from Lk. 11:46. It is possible that there was haplography when a copyist skipped from one καὶ to the other, but this would not explain the variety of texttypes for its omission. Since the inclusion of this word would support the thesis, its questionable status makes it seem best to carry on the argument without dependence upon this word.

⁵⁸ So Grimme, “Ein Herrenwort”, p. 172.

⁵⁹ Cf. Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, I:943; Josef Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 249; Floyd V. Filson, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 243; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 484; Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p. 725; Konrad Weiss, “φέρω...”, *TDNT*, IX:85-87; M. Jack Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology, and Law in Matthew's Gospel*, p. 107; Schweizer, *Matthew*, pp. 437-438; and Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 176, n. 3. Cf. Bonnard, *Mathieu*, p. 335.

It is unlikely that v. 4 refers to the burden of the Law which would anticipate the Pauline interpretation of the Law in Rom. 7:10-14; II Cor. 3:9; Gal. 3:10-13; 5:3 and 6:13 as Julius Schniewind, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 225, believed. Cf. also Acts 15:10.

⁶⁰ Cf. Barth, *Tradition*, p. 148, n. 2; and Weiss, “φέρω...”, p. 85. Urbach, *The Sages*, pp. 391-393, noted that it was a basic presupposition, among Tannaitic scholars, at least, that the observance of the Torah and the precepts should be carried out in a spirit of joy. Moore, *Judaism*, I:263, cited B. *Hor.* 3b and A.Z. 36a, as expressing basic principles that community decrees are not to be imposed which the majority of the community cannot fulfill.

it and easing the burden, or they will not “do it” themselves.⁶¹ Many scholars believe that v. 4b cannot intend that the scribes and Pharisees do not try to help others come to terms with the burden. They are influenced by the statement in v. 3b (“they say but do not do”) and interpret v. 4b to mean that the scribes do not follow their own prescriptions but with rabbinic acumen slip through the loopholes.⁶² On the other hand, Manson, for one, has maintained that v. 4b means they will not lift a finger to help those who break down under the burden of the rules they impose. They have multiplied “the number of ways in which a man may offend God”, but they have failed in helping him to please God.⁶³

The latter interpretation would seem to be the correct one. First, it is the most natural interpretation of the verb κινῆσαι (to “move” or “remove”).⁶⁴ Second, v. 4 was certainly intended by Matthew to recall 11:28-30. Thus, the φορτία βαρέα of the Pharisees contrasts with the φορτίον ἐλαφρόν of Jesus (11:30). The yoke of Jesus is easy—it fits. The yoke of Pharisaic legalism, from Matthew’s perspective, grates on men’s shoulders and crushes them. What follows in chap. 12 are concrete examples of Jesus freeing men from their oppressive burdens in the face of bitter opposition from the Pharisees who complain that Jesus breaks the Law.⁶⁵ This prompts Jesus to say that the Pharisees do not know God’s desire for mercy that outweighs legalistic and ritualistic demands (12:7; cf. 9:13). The clear allusion to 11:28-30 would imply that 23:4b also condemns the merciless scribes and Pharisees who pile burdens on men that are impossible to bear. Verse 4, thus, should be understood on its own terms rather

⁶¹ Some have thought that this refers to a refusal on the part of the Pharisees to touch the load themselves; cf. Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I:914; Moore, *Judaism*, I:262, n. 4; Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 182; Schlatter, *Matthäus*, p. 667; and Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, p. 337. This interpretation, however, seems more appropriate for the parallel in Luke. Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p. 725, claimed that v. 4b means that they tried to uphold the Law but were unable; however, the stress is not on their incapacity but on their malevolent wills (“they will not”).

⁶² So Haenchen, “Matthäus 23”, p. 41; Schmid, *Matthäus*, p. 249; Bornkamm, *Tradition*, p. 24; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 435; Suggs, *Wisdom*, p. 107; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 136; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 438; and Sand, *Das Gesetz*, p. 89.

⁶³ Manson, *Sayings*, p. 101. Cf. also, McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 330; Filson, *Matthew*, p. 243; and Fenton, *Matthew*, p. 366.

⁶⁴ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 433; and Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 952. Cf. Rev. 2:15 and 6:14.

⁶⁵ Weiss, “φέπω...”, p. 87. Cf. also Davies, *Setting*, p. 292.

than in the terms of v. 3. Therefore, there is a strong indication that the Pharisees have perverted the original intention of God's covenant by making the Law a burden; and certainly the statement of Jesus in 11:29, "learn of me", overrules vv. 2-3.⁶⁶ As a result, it seems reasonable to conclude that Matthew has introduced v. 4 at this point in order to modify vv. 2-3 rather than to provide an illustration for vv. 2-3.

Contradiction in Matthew

This brings to the fore the problem of Matthew's occasional juxtaposition of contradictory traditions.⁶⁷ If the statement in vv. 2-3 is understood as a blanket approval of the tradition of Pharisaic scribes, it is explicitly and implicitly contradicted throughout Matthew.⁶⁸ The criteria for determining Matthew's understanding must be fixed by the redactional material and not by material which is judged to be pre-Matthean as vv. 2-3 are.⁶⁹ The usual resolution of a contradiction is to assume when given conflicting materials A and B, if A is shown to reflect Matthew's own outlook, then B must have been retained because it was there in the tradition, not because it was apt.⁷⁰ This leaves unexplained, however, why Matthew altered the tradition at

⁶⁶ Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p. 100.

⁶⁷ C. F. D. Moule, "St. Matthew's Gospel: Some Neglected Features", *StEv*, II:92 (TU, 87), 1964, refers to the "anthological character" of Matthew in the sense that "it holds in its single bouquet traditions which seem mutually contradictory, and that it tends to conflate and fuse into one what seems originally to have been multiple". Cf. Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", pp. 38-39; and W. D. Davies, *Christian Origins*, p. 31. F. W. Beare, "The Sayings of Jesus in the Gospel According to St. Matthew", *StEv*, IV:146-156 (TU, 102), 1968, believed that Matthew failed to realize that some of the Jewish material he utilized did not fit.

⁶⁸ Cf. Mt. 5:21-48; 7:29; 12:11-12a; 15:6, 14; 16:12; 19:3-9; 23:16, 24; and 28:16-20.

⁶⁹ It is widely assumed that 23:2-3 are derived from a rigorous Christian Judaism which eventually separated from Pharisaic Judaism because of practice, not teaching (cf. Acts 21:20f.); so Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 182; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 40; C. H. Dodd, "Matthew and Paul", *New Testament Studies*, p. 63; Barth, *Tradition*, p. 86; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, pp. 203-204; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 138; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 430. H. C. Waetjen, *The Origin and Destiny of Humanness*, p. 232, n. 2, tentatively suggested that the Evangelist composed these verses for rhetorical reasons.

Schlatter, *Matthäus*, p. 665, believed that this statement went back to Jesus, who recognized that the scribes and Pharisees had a portion of truth. Others have "psychologized" unfruitfully that Jesus did not wish to undermine the support of the crowds who were too immature to bear the truth, or that Jesus was simply referring to the time being, before the crucifixion.

⁷⁰ Moule, "Some Neglected Features", p. 96.

some points when it suited his purpose and remained faithful to the tradition at other points even when it did not suit his purpose.⁷¹ Tagawa stated that the fundamental problem is: "how to discover the basis of Matthew's theology, by means of which the interpreter can understand these individual elements as organically combined".⁷² One option is to give up the one side of a contradiction as a residuum of old tradition and also give up Matthew as an organic whole. Another option is to concede that Matthew blithely allows contradictions to remain because he simply failed to assimilate the material carefully to his own point of view.⁷³ One more option is that Matthew utilized conservative Jewish Christian traditions without major changes, but their original intentions were transformed and given new connotations in different contexts.⁷⁴ The latter seems the best perspective to explain the presence of vv. 2-3.

Before continuing further in this vein, attention must be paid to the interpretation of Matthew's purpose in using vv. 2-3 offered by Hummel.⁷⁵ He allowed that vv. 2-3 comprised a fundamental affirmation of rabbinic teaching, recognizing that it cannot be considered as a "*theologische Aussage*" of Matthew, but rather as a "*taktische Anweisung*" designed to avoid a final break with Judaism by offering token allegiance to Pharisaic Judaism.⁷⁶ This hypothesis assumes that the dialogue with Judaism is *intra muros*, an assumption which has met with increasing challenges since it is only marginally supported

⁷¹ Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 307, n. 1.

⁷² Kenzo Tagawa, "People and Community in the Gospel of Matthew", *NTS*, XVI:149-150, 1969-1970.

⁷³ Ibid. Cf. Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p. 35; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 40; and Edward P. Blair, *Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 114.

⁷⁴ Cf. Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 290; and Meier, *Law*, pp. 27-30.

⁷⁵ Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 31.

⁷⁶ Cf. Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p. 121; W. D. Davies, *Setting*, p. 414; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 484; and Helmut Merkel, "Jesus und die Pharisäer", *NTS*, XIV:198-199, 1967-1968. Goulder, *Midrash*, p. 178, with a new twist, assumed that Matthew had parted company with "their synagogues" but was determined to prove his church's adherence to true Judaism by keeping all that the Pharisaic scribes taught. That there was a final separation between Matthew's church and Judaism can hardly be denied when Matthew refers to "their scribes" (7:29), "their synagogues" (4:23; 9:35; 12:9; 13:54), "your synagogues" (10:17; 23:34) and "the Jews" (28:15) and manifests a self-awareness over against the synagogue in his use of the term ἐκκλησία in 16:18 and 18:17. Cf. Wolfgang Schrage, "συναγωγή", *TDNT*, VII:829, who noted that the term "synagogue" was bound up very closely with the central position of Torah and tradition, whereas Jesus Christ occupied the central position for the church.

by isolated texts.⁷⁷ But if this were Matthew's purpose, one could imagine that he might have pulled it off more adroitly by leaving in the praise of the scribe in Mark 12:34 and leaving out the epithets in chap. 23. The increasing vehemence of the charges in chap. 23 makes this hypothesis unlikely.

The best alternative seems to be that the editor inserted this pre-Matthean conservative tradition (vv. 2-3) in order to provide a context for his discourse which is as much Matthew's as Jesus'. Verses 2-3 provide an introduction which presents the claims of the scribes (and Pharisees) to be the authorized guardians and interpreters of the Mosaic Law.⁷⁸ By doing this, Matthew introduced the issue of the proper interpretation of the Law and the question of authority; and he also has indirectly provided the grounds for the greater culpability of the scribes and Pharisees as the watchmen who failed in their care of the sheep and in their task of leading men to the kingdom of heaven because they failed to acknowledge who Jesus was (22:41-46). Banks is surely correct when he calls v. 3a a "rhetorical preparation" for the charges in v. 3b. The emphasis is on the second half of the verse⁷⁹ where the scribes and Pharisees are discredited in their behavior.⁸⁰ But he did not go far enough; vv. 2-3 are also

⁷⁷ Cf. Strecker, *Der Weg*, pp. 16, and 137-143; Hare, *Persecution*, pp. 147-148; and Charles E. Carlston, "The Things that Defile (Mark vii.14) and the Law in Matthew and Mark", *NTS*, XV:76, 1968-1969. Cf. also the summary of recent research by Daniel J. Harrington, "Matthean Studies since Joachim Rohde", *HJ*, XVI:380-381.

⁷⁸ Cf. the similar opinions of Klostermann, *Matthäus*, pp. 182-183; Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 210; and Waetjen, *Origin and Destiny*, pp. 218-219.

⁷⁹ Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 176.

⁸⁰ Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, p. 242, has noted that the priest was authorized in his office by his birth heritage, but the scribe's authority, like the prophet's, was grounded only in his knowledge of the divine will. There are many statements in the O.T. asserting that true understanding of the Law entails doing it (Deut. 4:6; Pss. 111:10; 119:34, 98-100; and Sir. 4:17-18). In Neofiti I (also Onkelos, the Fragmentary Targum and Pseudo-Jonathan) Num. 23:19 reads: "The Word of the Lord is not like the word of the sons of man; nor are the works of the Lord like the work of the sons of man; the sons of man say and do not; they decree and fulfill not; and they go back and deny their words. God, however, says and does; he decrees and fulfills, and his prophetic words are established forever".

Urbach, *The Sages*, p. 326, quoted a passage from the *Tanḥuma* edited by S. Buber § 3, p. 46, which may apply to Mt. 23:2-3. R. Johanan reportedly said that "whoever performs one precept truly is accounted as though he promulgated it from Mt. Sinai". Deut. 26:16, "Thou shalt therefore observe and do", was then quoted as the basis. From this one could easily conclude the converse. Those who do not observe and do cannot be associated with Mt. Sinai. Indeed, Urbach, p. 593, reached the same

an introduction for the rest of the charges in chap. 23 which deal largely with their failure to expound the Law correctly. They have been guilty of a defalcation of their responsibility. Banks is also correct when he concludes that v. 4 is an insertion which "sets the whole of v. 3 in proper perspective" so that it would not be misunderstood.⁸¹ Hare has remarked: "It is probable that the Torah-dispute was focused not so much on the attitude of Christians toward individual *halakoth* as on the question of the exegetical authority of Jesus and his church *vis-à-vis* the authority of the rabbis".⁸² Matthew, it seems, has brought this issue to the forefront with vv. 2-3 in what appears to be a concession to the ordained authority of the scribes and Pharisees. However, it must be seen in the context of chap. 23 only as a stratagem which sets the scene for an impeachment. Matthew could not deny that the scribes were ordained interpreters of the Law but he could impugn their competence.

Matthew 23:5

Verse 5a is a Matthean transition verse which serves to introduce the material from his special source and to link it to the stipulation in v. 3b (κατὰ δὲ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν μὴ ποιεῖτε = πάντα δὲ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν ποιοῦσιν).⁸³ Consequently, v. 5 was intended to provide the

conclusion as Jeremias that the authority of the sage depended upon his probity (cf. *Jos. Ant.* XIII:288). He stated it this way:

... at least until the destruction of the Temple, and even till the period of Jabneh, the principle task of the Sage still remained in the field of teaching and Halachic ruling, in works of charity and acts of lovingkindness. He sought to influence the sacred institutions of the people—the Temple, the Sanhedrin, and the priesthood—and to decide Halachic matters. But the power of his influence was derived solely from his wisdom, and the source of his authority lay in his deeds and qualities of character.

The authority of a religious leader is expressly formulated by Matthew in these terms. He testifies that the false prophet is known by his deeds (7:16, 20); rotten trees will bear bad fruit (7:18, 12:33-35). Therefore, the congruence of words and deeds is a prerequisite for those who would exercise authority (prophecy, teaching, binding and loosing). Anyone whose qualities of character (fruits) are wanting axiomatically is disqualified as an authority in religious matters. Therefore, by including a condemnation of the works of the scribes and Pharisees in 23:3b-7, Matthew simultaneously subverted their authority (cf. 7:29).

⁸¹ Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 176.

⁸² Hare, *Persecution*, p. 143.

⁸³ This phrase in 23:5a is the same as that in 6:1, and it neither fits the gist of the preceding nor that of the following very well. Cf. Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 41; Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 288; and Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 431.

example of the scribes and Pharisees "saying and not doing", not v. 4. The illustration exposes them as timeservers who do not intend to obey God but only desire to find favor with men.⁸⁴ Yet it is also important to bear in mind that the wearing of the *tefillin* and the fringes is intrinsically associated with the Law, the issue raised in v. 2. The purpose of the fringes was to remind the wearer of "all the commandments of the Lord", so as to do them and not to follow the desires of his own heart and eyes (Num. 15:37-41).⁸⁵ The same applies for the *tefillin*. Rabbi Johanan said of the *tefillin*: "If one desires to accept upon himself the yoke of the kingdom of heaven in the most complete manner, he should consult nature and wash his hands and put on *tefillin* and recite *Shema*' and say the *tefillah*: this is the complete acknowledgement of the kingdom of heaven" (B. Ber. 14b-15a).⁸⁶ The *tefillin* contained passages of scripture (cf. Exod. 13:1-10; Deut. 6:4-9; and 11:13-21) which directly enjoined remembrance of and obedience to the commands of God. Matthew perhaps chose material from his *Sonder*-tradition which portrayed the ostentation of the scribes and Pharisees but, at the same time, ironically laid bare their failure to be obedient to the Law with the very things designed to prompt obedience.

Verses 6-7a have been dealt with above and provide further examples of the false behavior of the scribes and Pharisees, but mainly, they provide an introduction for vv. 8-12 which is more pertinent to Matthew's purpose.

⁸⁴ On the meaning of the phrase "they broaden their phylacteries", cf. C. F. Burney, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 10; Israel Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, II:203-205; Manson, *Sayings*, pp. 230-231; G. George Fox, "The Matthean Misrepresentation of *Tephillin*", *JNES*, I:373-375, 1942; and J. Bowman, "Phylacteries", *StEv*, I:523-538 (TU, 73), 1959. Because of the clear example of the abuse of wearing the *tefillin* in J. Ber. 2:3 it seems that this would refer to the length of time the *tefillin* were worn beyond normal requirements. The use of the Greek term, *φουλακτήριον*, which means amulet, may insinuate that the *tefillin* had become like pagan charms. This is not unreasonable since they contained scriptures which promised God's protection (cf. Josephus *Ant.* IV:212-213), and their purpose could have easily become perverted as they were associated with magic lore. Cf. Urbach, *The Sages*, pp. 130, 366-367.

⁸⁵ Jesus himself wore fringes; cf. Mt. 9:20; 14:36 and Mk. 6:56.

⁸⁶ Cf. the excurses of Strack-Billerback on *tefillin* and fringes in *Kommentar*, IV, pt. 1:250-276; 277-292. According to the *Hakamim*, an *am ha aretz* was identified as anyone who did not put on the *tefillin* or did not have the fringe on his garment (B. Sot. 22a).

Matthew 23:8-12

Matthew 23:7b is a suture that joins vv. 6-7a to vv. 8-12.⁸⁷ The emphatic "and you" in v. 8 marks a sudden shift in the direction of this discourse from the scribes and Pharisees to a focus on the disciples and Matthew's own community.⁸⁸ It is no longer simply a polemic against the comportment of the Pharisees. The agenda widens to rules for regulating the Christian community.⁸⁹ The position of vv. 8-12 at the conclusion of the first part of the discourse would indicate that it comprises the *Zielworte* of vv. 2-7a and that these verses were intended to contrast the representatives of Israel with Jesus Messiah and the disciples.⁹⁰ Verses 8-12 clearly have a christological and ecclesiological overtone that must be seen as peculiar to Matthew's intention in vv. 1-12.

The christological overtone of Matthew 23:8-12. As the discourse progresses it becomes more and more obvious that 23:2-3 could only have served a utilitarian purpose for Matthew and could neither reflect his own theology nor a tactical concession that attempted to avoid a widening of the breach between the Pharisee-led synagogue and Christians. It is not just the practice of the Pharisees which is rejected; scribalism and the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law are opposed in v. 8.⁹¹ Not only is the title "rabbi" condemned, but the entire Rabbinate is precluded because assumption of this title

⁸⁷ So Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 183; Bultmann, *History*, p. 144; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 42; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 486; Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p. 727; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 18; Frankemölle, *Jawhebund*, p. 99, n. 87; and Green, *Matthew*, p. 190; against Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 33. Cf. above p. 18.

⁸⁸ Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p. 336.

⁸⁹ So Walker, *Heilsgeschichte*, p. 25; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 431; Minear, "False Prophets", p. 79; Sand, *Das Gesetz*, p. 88; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p. 99. The disciples had a typological and paradigmatic function for the community; cf. Frankemölle, pp. 146-158; Kingsbury, *Parables*, pp. 41-42; Ulrich Luz, "Die Jünger im Matthäusevangelium", *ZNW*, LXII:141-171, 1971; and Mark Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship in Matthew and Luke", *BibThBull*, III:235-255, 1973.

⁹⁰ Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 288. Verses 8-10 have been classified by Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 117, as a distinctive form of Matthean *halacha* (cf. 5:22, 34-36; 18:15-20). William G. Thompson, *Matthew's Advice to a Divided Community*, pp. 186-187, contended that the concise, easily remembered formulation suggested a didactic purpose and may be considered Matthean insofar as the evangelist tends to include this type of material in his gospel.

⁹¹ Against Davies, *Setting*, p. 106.

is said to be an encroachment on the prerogatives of God.⁹² One only is the teacher, and there can be no doubt that Jesus is this *one* teacher and the mediator of God's will who, in the gospel of Matthew, surpasses even Moses.⁹³ Virtually all commentators have recognized that Matthew 28:18-20 is the key to the gospel that recapitulates its major themes.⁹⁴ These verses conclude the gospel with the command of the risen Lord for the disciples to teach the nations πάντα ὅσα (cf. 23:3a) Jesus (not Moses nor the scribes and Pharisees) had commanded.

Interestingly, Jesus is addressed as "teacher" in Matthew only by the opponents, the uncommitted, and Judas, never by the other disciples.⁹⁵ Kingsbury has argued convincingly that Matthew delib-

⁹² On the debate over whether or not the title "rabbi" is anachronistic, cf. Hershel Shanks, "Is the Title 'Rabbi' Anachronistic in the Gospels?" *JQR*, LIII:317-345, 1963; and "Origin of the Title 'Rabbi'", *JQR*, LIX:152-157, 1969; Solomon Zeitlin, "A Reply", *JQR*, LIII:345-349, 1963; and "The Title 'Rabbi' in the Gospels is Anachronistic", *JQR*, LIX:158-160, 1969. Cf. also Gustaf Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, pp. 331-340.

The original saying may go back to Jesus with the meaning, "Be not called great, for one is great (God)". Cf. R. S. Barbour, "Uncomfortable Words VIII: Status and Titles", *ET*, LXXXII:137-142, 1971; and Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 431. But probably it reflects a rabbinic insistence on titles which is manifest in the description of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, "who every time he beheld a scholar-disciple rose from his throne and embraced and kissed him, calling him 'Father, Father', 'Rabbi, Rabbi', 'Mari, Mari' ..." (B. *Makk.* 24a). Cf. M. *Ab.* 6:3. By Matthew's day "rabbi" was rapidly becoming a fixed title for the scribal teacher who had been ordained as an interpreter of the Law; cf. Eduard Lohse, "ῥαββί ...", *TDNT*, VI:962. Matthew has apparently assumed this understanding of the term as a title for a teacher in 23:7b-8. Cf. Davies, *Setting*, pp. 297-298.

⁹³ Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 43. Jesus is portrayed as the teacher par excellence in 4:23; 5:2; 7:29; 9:35; 11:1; 13:54; 21:23; 22:16; and 26:55. Matthew emphasizes more than any other gospel that Jesus sits to teach. He also includes the statement in 24:34: "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words will not pass away".

There is also a very subtle minimization of Moses in Matthew's gospel. This is revealed by the fact that only the Jewish leaders refer to Moses as the giver of the Law. Jesus always refers to God. That this is redactional may be seen by comparing the following passages: Mk. 7:10; Mt. 15:4; Mk. 10:3-5; Mt. 19:7-8; Mk. 12:19; Mt. 22:24; and Mk. 12:26; Mt. 22:31. Cf. J. M. Gibbs, "The Son of God as the Torah Incarnate in Matthew", *StEv*, IV (TU, 102), 1968. Apart from 19:7 and 22:24 where, respectively, the Pharisees and the Sadducees are speaking, ἐντολή always has God or Jesus (not Moses) as its source in Matthew (5:19; 15:3; 19:17; 22:38, 40); while ἐντέλλεσθαι always has God or Jesus as its subject (4:6; 17:9; 28:20). The Law of Moses is abrogated directly in 5:31-32; 19:3-9; and 5:33-37, 38-39.

⁹⁴ Cf. the summary by Ellis, *Matthew*, pp. 22-24.

⁹⁵ Cf. Mt. 8:19; 9:11; 12:38; 17:24; 18:16; 22:24, 36; and 26:25, 49. Cf. also Mt. 10:24-25 and 26:18. In contrast, cf. Mk. 4:38; 5:35; 9:17; 38; 10:17, 20, 35; 12:14, 19, 32; 13:1; and 14:14.

erately connected the teaching of Jesus to his status as the son of God, and consequently, Jesus was to be accorded infinitely more respect than that reserved merely for an ordained scribe.⁹⁶ Therefore, the disciples always address Jesus as Lord; he is the *one* teacher.⁹⁷

In v. 9 christology merges with theology as the disciples are warned against the use of the title "father" because there is only one heavenly father. The interpretation of this verse has created some disagreement.⁹⁸ In light of the clear context which has to do with the question

⁹⁶ Kingsbury, *Matthew*, p. 92; cf. pp. 60-61. Cf. Mt. 8:25 = Mk. 4:33; Mt. 17:4 = Mk. 9:5; Mt. 20:28 = Mk. 10:51; Mt. 21:20 = Mk. 11:21; and Mt. 26:22, 25, 49. Cf. also James Donaldson, "The Title Rabbi in the Gospels—Some Reflections on the Evidence of the Gospels", *JQR*, LXIII:288-290, 1973.

⁹⁷ Lohse, "παῖσι...", p. 965, asserted that Matthew is seeking to emphasize that Jesus is not a teacher in the Jewish sense but the Lord of his people. The ambiguity of whether or not v. 8 refers to God, as does v. 9, or Jesus, perhaps is not unintentional since, for Matthew, Jesus was "God with us".

⁹⁸ The voice of the verb was changed from the passive in vv. 8 and 10 to the active in v. 9 (μὴ καλέσῃτε). It is not a title which the disciples might be tempted to acquire for themselves, but a title which they might bestow on others. This suggests that v. 9 may not be original to the context and vv. 8-10 are composite. The inclusion of the title "Christ" in v. 10 is surely an addition either by an earlier traditioner or by Matthew. However, it is difficult to say how much of vv. 8-10 goes back to Jesus, how much to an early church formulation, and how much to Matthew. Cf. Ernst Käsemann, "The Beginning of Christian Theology", *New Testament Questions of Today*, pp. 84-85; Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p. 221; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 43; Bultmann, *History*, p. 144; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p. 336; and J. Ramsey Michaels, "Christian Prophecy and Matthew 23:8-12: A Test Exegesis", *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, pp. 305-310.

The ὅμων in v. 9 is also quite awkward. According to John T. Townsend, "Matthew XXIII. 9", *JTS*, XII:56-59, 1961, there are two possible translations: a) "do not call (anyone) on earth your father", or b) "do not call (anyone) of you father on earth". Four possible interpretations emerge. The reference may be to a) Jewish leaders who have assumed this title, b) Christian leaders who wish to assume this title, c) Jewish "fathers" who are authorities in religious matters, or d) the patriarchs. The last is the interpretation of Townsend, Schweizer, *Matthew*, pp. 431-432, and Michaels. They claimed that v. 9 implies that one is not to boast of his Hebrew ancestry (cf. Mt. 3:9 Lk. 3:8). This assumes that "father" was not characteristically a title for contemporary rabbis. K. Kohler, "Abba, Father. Title of Spiritual Leader and Saint", *JQR*, XIII:567-580 (1900-1901), has shown that "the fathers" became "the standing name for the ancient masters of the law"; but it was also conferred upon saintly individual teachers. The title should, therefore, be associated with a teaching function (cf. II Kgs. 2:12) inseparably related to the scribal tradition. It is not a warning for the disciples not to rely on their Jewish heritage for salvation—this idea is entirely extraneous to the context—nor is it simply a warning against titles or hegemonical attitudes; it is a repudiation of the "tradition of the fathers". Gottlob Schrenk, "πατήρ...", *TDNT*, V:976-978, 991, n. 286, also believed that v. 9 was in opposition to a Rabbinate which claimed sovereignty in matters of religious law and custom.

Hillel and Shammai, the Zugoth, R. Ishmael and R. Akiba were called "fathers

of teaching authority, the warning has an indirect reference to "the tradition of the fathers" which represented the scribal interpretation of the Law. As far as Matthew was concerned, this tradition was rejected. The mention of "the one father" would have been designed as an allusion to Malachi 2:7-10 which deals with the false teaching of the Law by those (in this instance, priests) who should have safeguarded knowledge as the messengers of the Lord Almighty. Instead, they destroyed the covenant and twisted the law so that many stumbled. They, like the scribes and Pharisees, are cursed for their defalcation of this responsibility.

Verse 10 is essentially equivalent to v. 8: Only the title has been changed (μὴ κληθῆτε Ῥαββί = μὴδε κληθῆτε καθηγηταί), and both terms refer to teachers. Καθηγητής, then, may simply be a variation of the title "rabbi". Perhaps it is a translation of ῥαββί for Gentile Christian readers,⁹⁹ or perhaps v. 10 was intended to dissociate Jesus from the hellenistic teacher as well.¹⁰⁰ Possibly, both motives came into play, but the final result is significant. Kingsbury observed that 23:8 and 23:10a form an inclusion and that the two equivalent terms, διδάσκαλος and καθηγητής, stand in apposition to Χριστός in v. 10b. He incisively remarked that Matthew has intended "to set forth the fundamental truth that it is none other than the Messiah who is the one teacher of the disciples".¹⁰¹ It is, thus, quite apparent

of the world" (cf. *M. Eduy.* 1:4 and Urbach, *The Sages*, pp. 186, and 906, n. 38 for other citations). The Mishnah tractate *Pirke Aboth* should immediately come to mind. Paul also referred to the "tradition of the fathers" when he recounted his zeal and progress in Judaism (Gal. 1:14). The phrase recurs in Josephus *Ant.* XVIII:297, 408, in his account of the Pharisees.

⁹⁹ So Dalman, *Words*, p. 340; Moule, "Neglected Features", p. 96. Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 217; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 486; Trilling, "Amt und Amtverständnis bei Matthäus", *Mélanges Bédaride Rigaux*, p. 30; and Michaels, "Christian Prophecy", pp. 307-308.

¹⁰⁰ Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp. 99-100. There does not seem to be an Aramaic equivalent for καθηγητής. C. Spicq, "Une Allusion au Docteur de Justice dans Matthieu, XXIII, 10?" *RB*, LXVI:393-396, 1959, argued that it might refer to the Hebrew מורה and allude to the Teacher of Righteousness at Qumran; but there is little evidence to support this conclusion.

It is remotely possible that the title καθηγητής alludes to v. 2 (the scribes and Pharisees ἐκάθισαν on the καθέδρα of Moses) through homonymy. They are properly ἐξηγηταί, expounders of the law (cf. Jos. *Ant.* XVIII:15, XI:192; Philo. *Spec. Leg.* II:159; *Apol. pro Iuda* VIII:7, 13); but the redactor has made a play on words. This would be further evidence that the authority of the scribes and Pharisees is null and void for Matthew.

¹⁰¹ Kingsbury, *Matthew*, p. 93.

from vv. 8-10 that only Jesus is the rightful occupant of Moses' seat.¹⁰² *The ecclesiological overtone of Matthew 23:8-12.* There is also a decided ecclesiological application in vv. 8-12 along with the christological emphasis. van Tilborg has astutely concluded: "Mt. 23:8-12 links up with Mt.'s own vision that the mutual relationships within the community are defined immediately by Christ and the Father".¹⁰³ These verses are specifically directed to "you", the disciples, who may be seen as paradigms for the community;¹⁰⁴ consequently, vv. 8-12 comprise regulations for the community. The insertion of these verses into an anti-pharisaical woe discourse, again, should not be overlooked in realizing what Matthew is about in chap. 23. It is certainly not happenstance,¹⁰⁵ and vv. 8-12 cannot be dismissed as an aside that is only tangentially related to Matthew's purpose. Verses 8-12 should be seen as a major clue for understanding the entire chapter.

Matthew 23:11-12. The axioms in vv. 11-12 regarding service and humility as a measure of greatness appear to have been deliberately combined by the editor and added to vv. 8-10.¹⁰⁶ These logia are attested in varied form elsewhere in Matthew and in the synoptic tradition (Mt. 23:11 = Mt. 20:26-27; Mk. 9:35; 10:43-44; and Lk. 9:48; 22:26. Mt. 23:12 = Mt. 18:4; Lk. 14:11 and 18:14; cf. also Jas. 4:6; and IPet. 5:5). However, they never appear in combination as they do in 23:11-12, and there is no *Stichwort* association that would have conduced their combination to form a unit of tradition. Since they are joined to material which comes from Matthew's *Sondergut* that presupposes a community situation¹⁰⁷ and since these principles confirm the stipulations in vv. 8-10 and since the following woes may be seen to confirm these principles, there is every reason to believe that Matthew intentionally joined v. 11 and v. 12 together and inserted them at this point in the discourse. These

¹⁰² There may be an eschatological overtone in vv. 8-10 that recalls Jer. 31:31-34 where it is promised that God will become the teacher of the community of the end time of salvation, and they will have the Law imprinted on their hearts (cf. I Jn. 2:24): Cf. Ernst Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu: Eine Erklärung des Markus-Evangeliums und der kanonischen Parallelen*, p. 423.

¹⁰³ van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 137. Matthew understood the church as a brotherhood (cf. 5:22-24, 47; 18:15, 21, 35; 12:48-50; 25:40; and 28:10).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. above, n. 89.

¹⁰⁵ Judging from v. 7b and vv. 11-12, vv. 8-10 appear to have been deliberately included by Matthew.

¹⁰⁶ So Trilling, "Amt", p. 31; and Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 289.

¹⁰⁷ Mt. 18:1-4 and 20:20, which parallel 23:11-12, occur in a context dealing with rank in the kingdom of heaven which vv. 11-12 would surely recall to the reader.

verses, however, not only interpret vv. 8-10¹⁰⁸ they also interpret the entire first part of the discourse.¹⁰⁹ This means that chap. 23 is not just a denunciation of Jewish leaders or Judaism; it is a warning to the entire Christian community.¹¹⁰ It is *didache*, a polemic against the abuse of authority.

The abuse of authority by the Jewish leaders is applicable to the leaders of the church as a stern warning. The disciples have taken over the assignments of the Jewish scribes (13:52). They have the power of the keys, authority in teaching and discipline (16:19; 18:18; and 28:18). They do not sit on the throne of Moses; but they will sit on thrones with the son of man, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (19:28; cf. 25:31). However, there is a problem of false leaders within the mixed church of Matthew. The community must learn to protect themselves from the wolves, the false prophets (7:15-23; cf. 18:6; 24:45-51); and a disciple must avoid at all cost becoming a false prophet himself.¹¹¹ There is an emphasis in Matthew on teaching and obedience for the disciple (5:19-20; 7:24-26). The whole discourse in chaps. 23-25 emphasizes "doing" and "keeping", beginning with these words in 23:3 and closing with them in 25:45-46. The definition of Israel has been redefined in terms of doing God's will (12:50), and the vineyard is not unceremoniously taken away from the former tenants and given to just anyone. It is given to a nation that will produce the fruits in due season (21:31, 41 and 43). In light of this, the scribes and Pharisees and the fate of all Israel were viewed as forbidding examples to the Christian community of what could also happen to them and what to avoid. The scribes and Pharisees are, thus, the antitheses of the disciples. This becomes clear when it is realized that vv. 1-12 are carefully balanced in structure. In v. 2, it is recognized that the scribes and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses and what follows in vv. 3-7 is a description of their unworthy behavior. In v. 8, there is a total rejection of the title "rabbi" for Christians because Christ is their only teacher; a description of the *worthy* behavior required of the disciples immediately follows.

The inclusion of vv. 8-12 would indicate that chap. 23 should be

¹⁰⁸ Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, pp. 27-28; and Trilling, "Amt", p. 32.

¹⁰⁹ Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", pp. 289 and 296.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 297; cf. Fenton, *Matthew*, pp. 364-365; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p. 189; and "Amtskritik im Matthäus-Evangelium?" *Bib*, LIV:250, 1973.

¹¹¹ Minear, "False Prophecy", p. 80. Cf. also, Did. 11-13; I Jn. 4:1.

read not only as a denunciation of Pharisaic Judaism but also as a warning to the Christian community—particularly its leaders who are charged with special responsibilities.¹¹²

¹¹² Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 296, concluded about the chapter: "Matthäus 23 wird zusammengehalten nicht von der Wehe-Form, nicht vom Vorwurf 'Heuchelei' und auch nicht von dem Gedanken an eine Endabrechnung, sondern von der matthäischen Art, Traditionen aufzugreifen, zu zitieren und durch Änderungen und Kompositionen zu interpretieren. Matthäus 23 wird zusammengehalten von der Polemik gegen den Missbrauch der Autorität, der in vielfältiger Form von christlichen Gruppen und Gemeinden den Führern des Judentums zum Vorwurf gemacht wurde und der ihnen als eine Erklärung der furchtbaren Ereignisse um das Jahr 70 n. Chr. dienen konnte".

CHAPTER THREE

THE INTENTION OF THE WOES OF MATTHEW 23

The nucleus of Matthew 23 is the seven woes which begin with v. 13 (excluding v. 14),¹ yet the intention of οὐαὶ is subject to debate. What exactly does οὐαὶ connote? Or even more to the point, what do the seven woes in the context of Matthew 23 connote? Are they anguished cries of grief which lament over the scribes and Pharisees, or are they maledictions officially pronounced upon them? Commentators disagree. Some claim that οὐαὶ expresses sorrowful pity with no hint of imprecation, while others argue that the woes are more akin to curses, and still others maintain that οὐαὶ may indicate either lamentation or malediction depending upon its context. This chapter attempts to determine the significance of the woe cry as it relates to Matthew's intention in chapter 23.

THE VIEWS OF SCHOLARS CONCERNING THE INTENTION OF Οὐαὶ

The unmistakable tone of stridor in chap. 23 seems accentuated by the sevenfold cry of woe. Montefiore detected an air of finality in the woes which—in light of the statement of Jesus in Matthew 9:13 (“For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners”)—caused him to question whether Jesus desired that only one sort of sinner be healed or whether the woes of chap. 23 simply represented poor tactics in evangelism.² Out of sensitivity to this kind of issue many Christian interpreters, it seems, have attempted to ameliorate the severity of the woes which indeed appears to be strangely out of character for Jesus.³ It is difficult to imagine Jesus pronouncing a curse on his enemies in light of such passages as Luke 23:34 (although textually spurious). However, this study is not focused on the intention of Jesus, but the intention of Matthew; and the two

¹ See above, p. 15, n. 17.

² Claude G. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels: Edited with an Introduction and a Commentary*, 1:296.

³ H. Benedict Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 187, for example, remarked; “the extreme bitterness of this chapter is out of character with what we can recover of the historical Jesus (though very much in line with the Johannine Christ; cf. Jn. 8:39ff.)”.

should not be confused. Chap. 23 is a Matthean composition whereby Matthew has taken up traditions and interpreted them through alterations and rearrangements to express his own theology. Therefore, Matthew's intention may express something quite opposite to Jesus' intention in the original setting. This chapter will attempt to uncover Matthew's understanding of the series of woes.

Ὀὐαὶ as an Expression of Sorrowful Pity

The repeated refrain, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" sounds imprecatory, but McNeile, for one, sought to make clear that *Ὀὐαὶ* could express "sorrowful pity no less than anger".⁴ Therefore, many believe that the woes of chap. 23 should definitely be distinguished from the malevolence of the curse. Plummer asserted that "Indeed, 'Alas for you' may represent the meaning of each utterance rather than 'Woe unto you'".⁵

Ὀὐαὶ as an Expression of Pity and Anger

Condemnation permeates the context of Matthew 23, and it cannot be muffled simply by translating *Ὀὐαὶ* as "Alas!". Other commentators have consequently made further refinements in the understanding of the intention of *Ὀὐαὶ*. Although *Ὀὐαὶ* does not damn the scribes and Pharisees and may best be translated "Alas!" it does pass judgment on condemnable conduct. Many commentators have maintained, therefore, that while the woe is not a curse nor simply a denunciation, in Matthew 23 it expresses *both* pity *and* anger. It is a condemnation, yet it is also, and perhaps even more so, a cry of lamentation.⁶

⁴ Alan Hugh McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 159.

⁵ Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, p. 316. Cf. G. E. P. Cox, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, p. 157; R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, pp. 120 and 216-217; and A. W. Argyle, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 174.

⁶ Frank Stagg, "Matthew", *BBC*, VIII:213. Adolf Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus*, p. 672, suggested that in "woe" both wrath and grief come to expression because the wrath directs itself against the sin which causes the lament. He is followed by Paul Gaechter, *Das Matthäus Evangelium*, p. 733. A. R. C. Leaney, *The Gospel According to Luke*, p. 136, stated that "woe" was not the pronunciation of a curse; "it is rather witnessing to a fact plain for all to see and understand, which the speaker does not claim to bring about but of which he has clear insight". John Hoad, "On Matthew xxiii.15: A Rejoinder", *ET*, LXXIII:212, 1961-1962, claimed that the woe was an "awesome lament" whose sting should not be drawn. The element of a stern warning has also been noted by J. C. Fenton, *The Gospel of Saint Matthew*, p. 368: "*Woe to you* expresses a double idea: first, grief or indignation at the sin which is defined in the following clause; secondly, a warning of punishment from God for those who have committed this sin".

Stagg stresses particularly that the judgmental aspect of the woes should not be misconstrued, for it is redemptive in intention.⁷ This would counter an objection raised about Jesus' evangelistic strategy, and the woes would conform to the well-known Old Testament pattern of a threatening prophet who chastises a stubborn audience. There should be no more cause to blush over these denunciations of the Jewish leaders than there is to blush over Amos' scathing denunciations of his own people. Should not Jesus be seen in the same light as a luminous and explosive prophet proclaiming the anger of the Lord?⁸ Baum has written concerning the menacing prophet that: "However grave the transgressions of the people and however terrible the punishment in store for them, the message was delivered for the sake of the people's conversion to a God who was always willing to forgive them".⁹ From this perspective, Jesus adopted the role of the prophet (cf. 21:11, 46) who did not mince words in attempting to penetrate the stony hearts of a straying people. Therefore, many scholars believe that the woes are pronounced with an element of hope that there will be repentance in the end.

Ὀὐαὶ as an Expression of Malediction

On the other hand, other scholars have concluded that the use of *Ὀὐαὶ* in chap. 23 does imply a curse.¹⁰ Haenchen acknowledged that *Ὀὐαὶ* is related to the Old Testament prophetic indictment and the foreknowledge of imminent catastrophe which naturally led to lamentation; but in distinction, he maintained that "when Christ pronounces such a woe, then it is the word of the divine judge himself and it is a damning verdict along with its justification".¹¹ Haenchen stated later in *Der Weg Jesu* that the woe in chap. 23 was an actual curse, a malediction.¹² In connection with this, it is implied just

⁷ Stagg, "Matthew", p. 213.

⁸ Cf. the insight of Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets*, pp. 279-298, on "The Meaning and Mystery of Wrath".

⁹ Gregory Baum, *Is the New Testament Anti-Semitic? A Reexamination of the New Testament*, p. 69.

¹⁰ Cf. Ernst Käsemann, "The Beginnings of Christian Theology", *New Testament Questions of Today*, p. 101.

¹¹ Ernst Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", *ZTK*, XLVIII:46, 1951.

¹² Ernst Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu. Eine Erklärung des Markus-Evangeliums und der kanonischen Parallelen*, p. 424: "Es [das 'Wehe'] ist nicht bloss ein 'frommer Wunsch', d.h. ein ohnmächtiges Wünschen, sondern ein wirkender Fluch, einer Verwünschung, von der Kräfte des Unheils ausgehen. Als Wort des Christus—so verstehen es Mt und Lk—bringt ein 'Wehe' das göttliche Gericht". Wolfgang Beilner, *Christus*

before the outset of chap. 23 that Jesus is David's Lord (22:45). Dalman has noted incisively that David's Lord was no mere man, and the right to judge the world was assumed in his forgiving of sins (Mt. 9:6, Mk. 2:10, Lk. 5:24).¹³ The one who could proclaim someone eschatologically blessed¹⁴ should also be able to proclaim someone eschatologically cursed. The condemnation of chap. 23 is expressed inherently in οὐαὶ pronounced by Jesus himself and is compounded by the fact that the scribes and Pharisees show no signs of regret or repentance; and, according to 23:32-37, they will stubbornly continue in a recalcitrance that will lead to final ruin. There are, thus, irreconcilable differences among scholars concerning the proper interpretation of the intention of the woe. Should it be understood as an expression of grief over sin and its inexorable consequences, as a severe condemnation designed to startle and lead to repentance, or as a malediction?

THE USAGE OF Οὐαὶ IN MATTHEW

The differences in opinion over the intention of οὐαὶ in Matthew 23 may be explained in part by the personal interests and viewpoints of each scholar, but the use of οὐαὶ in other contexts in Matthew is also a telling factor which needs to be examined.

und die Pharisäer. Exegetische Untersuchung über Grund und Verlauf der Auseinandersetzungen, p. 200, entitled the section on chap. 23, "Die Verdammung der Schriftgelehrten und Pharisäer". Siegfried Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten*, pp. 94-95, viewed the woe as an eschatological curse; cf. also Floyd V. Filson, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 244. John L. McKenzie, "The Gospel According to Matthew", *JBC*, p. 102, referred to the woes as "invectives", and Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, p. 433, referred to them as "curses". Cf. M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, p. 468.

¹³ Gustaf Dalman, *The Words of Jesus, Considered in the Light of Post-Biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language*, pp. 314-315. Cf. Alexander Sand, *Das Gesetz und die Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Evangeliums nach Matthäus*, pp. 138-167, who showed that while Jesus is a prophet, he is much more than a prophet; he is the Lord and coming Judge. Certainly, Peter F. Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message*, p. 80, was correct when he noted that Jesus was like the prophets in the Old Testament who brought God's message of judgment, threatened woes and the foreboding "Day of the Lord", promised blessing for obedience and curses for disobedience, and predicted the destruction of God's House in which the people placed their trust. However, Jesus was more than a prophet for Matthew; and as McNeile himself pointed out, *Matthew*, p. 97, it is only in Matthew of the synoptics that Jesus explicitly claims to be the judge (Mt. 19:28).

¹⁴ Cf. Friedrich Hauck, "μακάριος", *TDNT*, IV:369.

Matthew 24:19

Shortly after the woes in chap. 23, a woe cry is found in 24:19 reflecting the great tribulation:

οὐαὶ δὲ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσιν καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις.

One can hardly imagine that this could be a malediction against pregnant women.¹⁵ This statement represents rather a compassionate concern for the necessity of flight for those whose physical condition makes flight less than propitious. The meaning of οὐαὶ is clearly a pained “Alas!”.¹⁶

Matthew 18:7 and 26:24

This is also probably the case with the woes in Matthew 18:7 and 26:24. In 18:7, οὐαὶ is uttered over the world because of the inevitable occasions for stumbling and over the man who occasions the stumbling:

Ὅουαὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἀπὸ τῶν σκανδάλων· ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τὰ σκάνδαλα πλὴν οὐαὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ δι’ οὗ τὸ σκάνδαλον ἔρχεται.

There is no vindictiveness in these words which are followed with positive, if radical, advice (vv. 8-9).¹⁷ Concern is expressed over the responsibility for sin and the inherent penalty which sin entails.¹⁸ Again the meaning of οὐαὶ is probably “Alas!”. In 26:24, a similar woe is found:

ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ, οὐαὶ δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκείνῳ δι’ οὗ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται· καλὸν ἢν αὐτῷ εἰ οὐκ ἐγεννήθη ὁ ἀνθρώπος ἐκείνος.

¹⁵ One could stretch the imagination and cite En. 99:5: “And in those days the destitute shall go forth and carry off their children, and they shall abandon them, so that their children shall perish through them: Yea, they shall abandon their children (that are still) sucklings, and not return to them, and shall have no pity on their beloved ones”, as a possible background for condemnation of women with sucklings at a time of eschatological crisis. But the context of Mt. 24:16 and 20 is clearly that of the necessity of flight and its incumbent problems for pregnant women. Cf. II Apoc. Bar. 10:13-16.

¹⁶ Filson, *Matthew*, p. 255.

¹⁷ Gustav Stählin, “σκάνδαλον...”, *TDNT*, VII: 347, n. 50, noted that the woe on the victim is rare because he believed the woe was generally employed in anticipation of damnation at the Last Judgment. The Lucan version in 17:1, by way of contrast, concedes that σκάνδαλα will inevitably come but pronounces the woe on the perpetrator.

A similar construction is found in Ign. Trall. 8:2: οὐαὶ γάρ, δι’ οὗ ἐπὶ ματαιότητι τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπὶ τινῶν βλασφημεῖται and in II Clem. 13:2: οὐαὶ δι’ ὃν βλασφημεῖται τὸ ὄνομά μου. The context reveals that the woe is clearly condemnatory.

¹⁸ Cf. McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 261; Schlatter, *Matthäus*, p. 549; Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p. 592; Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 416; Pierre Bonnard, *L’Évangile selon Saint Matthieu*, p. 270.

Once again the context does not seem to be bitter condemnation. Jesus does not say "Woe to you, Judas, hypocrite and traitor!", nor does he expel him from the room. It is assumed that Judas remained and even partook of the symbols of the new covenant. The οὐαί here is probably a cry of sorrow and anguish because one of the twelve became a traitor; and the saying "it would have been better for that man had he not been born", is not a curse, "but a sad recognition of the facts".¹⁹ It follows that the meaning of οὐαί seems once more to be "Alas!".

It is thus evident from the above usages within the gospel of Matthew itself that οὐαί can and does express sorrow and pity more than anger. Perhaps it is natural, then, to import the meaning of οὐαί detected in these instances into chap. 23, particularly if 23:37 is viewed as a poignant lament over Jerusalem.

Matthew 11:21

However, there is one other woe, found in Matthew 11:21, where the context is quite different:

Ὁυαί σοι, Χοραζὶν· οὐαί σοι, Βηθσαϊδά· ὅτι εἰ ἐν Τύρῳ καὶ Σιδῶνι ἐγένοντο αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γινόμεναι ἐν ὑμῖν, πάλαι ἂν ἐν σάκκῳ καὶ σποδῷ μετενόησαν.

Mighty works were performed in these Galilean cities, but there was no response. It is announced that it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for the notoriously sinful cities of Tyre and Sidon²⁰ and Sodom than for Chorazin and Bethsaida (vv. 22, 24) while Capernaum will be cast into Hades. The context is clearly divine judgment, which is announced by the οὐαί, upon those who have had greater privilege and, therefore, greater responsibility.²¹

From these differing contexts, Bonnard has concluded that there are obviously two distinct usages of οὐαί in Matthew. The woes

¹⁹ Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 542.

²⁰ Cf. Isa. 23:1-8; Ezek. 26-28; Joel 3:4-8; Amos 1:9-10; and Zech. 9:2-4. The future fate of Tyre and Sidon is not auspicious according to the Old Testament. According to II Peter 2:4-10 and Jude 7, Sodom and Gomorrah were condemned to extinction to make them an example for the ungodly. From Mt. 11:22ff. the fate of these Galilean cities will be even worse than that of Tyre and Sidon.

²¹ Cf. the exegesis of Joachim Gnilka, *Die Verstockung Israels. Isaias 6:9-10 in der Theologie der Synoptiker*, p. 98. Rolf Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium*, pp. 50-52, claimed that Matthew returned to the theme of "der Verwerfung Israels ... so dass er die ganze komposition als Gerichtsrede wider Israel verstanden wissen will". Cf. Schulz, *Q*, pp. 364-365.

in 11:21 and 23:13ff. connote displeasure and cursing rather than suffering. In these passages, Jesus is portrayed as severely condemning his adversaries; however, in the other passages there is a much stronger note of lamentation.²² Bonnard seems to have found the clue: that there is a distinctive difference between the οὐαί in 11:21, 23:13ff. and in the other passages, 18:7, 24:19, 26:24. An analysis of the forms of these woes would seem to settle the matter and may lead to a clarification of the meaning of the woe.

Formal Analysis of the Matthean Woes

When a formal comparison is made of the woes in Matthew, it is immediately apparent that the introductory parts of 11:21 and 23:13ff. are the same.²³ Both consist of οὐαί plus a second person pronoun followed by the name of those specifically addressed: οὐαί σοι, Χοραζίν and οὐαί ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι. In 18:7, 24:19 and 26:24 the address is far more impersonal, indirect and removed: woe to the world, woe to the man, woe to the pregnant woman, woe to that man, whoever the world, man or woman might be. His or her identity is unspecified and applies to anyone who should happen to fall into these circumstances: a man who causes stumbling, a woman who is pregnant during the great tribulation, the man who should betray the son of man. In contrast, the woes in 11:21 and 23:13ff. are addressed to specific parties as a result of specific behavior in which they have engaged and/or continue to engage.

Secondly, in 11:21 and 23:13, 15, 23, 27, 29 there is an ὅτι clause.²⁴ There is a specified reason for the announcement of woe,

²² Bonnard, *Matthieu*, pp. 338 and 452. Cf. Jean-Claude Margot, "The Translation of OUAİ", *The Bible Translator*, XIX:26-27, 1968.

²³ Cf. the analysis by Paul S. Minear, "False Prophecy and Hypocrisy in the Gospel of Matthew", *Neues Testament und Kirche. Für Rudolf Schnackenburg*, p. 88: 1) address, "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees", 2) justification of the woe, "hypocrites", 3) causal clause introduced by ὅτι, defining the kind of hypocrisy criticized.

²⁴ Cf. also Lk. 6:24-25, Jude 11 and Ep. Barn. 6:2 where an ὅτι clause is present in the woe. There is no ὅτι clause in 23:16. This is probably because vv. 16-22 was not originally a woe. 23:16 is different in its salutation, "blind guides" instead of "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites", and it is a carefully constructed chiasmus [a] v. 16, rabbinic decision about temple gold, and v. 17, refutation with a rhetorical question; b) v. 18, rabbinic decision about altar gifts, and v. 19 refutation with a rhetorical question; b') logic of decision about altar; a') logic of decision about temple gold; c) another rabbinic decision about swearing by heaven] which suggests an independence from the other woes. Cf. Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 47; McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 334; and Minear, "False Prophecy", p. 89, that this was an independent unit which has been stylized into a woe by Matthew and inserted at this point.

and that sin which evoked the woe is specifically identified. In contrast, there is no $\delta\tau\iota$ clause in 18:7, 24:19 or 26:24.²⁵

Thirdly, there is a day of judgment context in 11:21 ff. and chap. 23 where punishment is to be meted out for the sins (cf. 11:22, 24; 23:38-39).²⁶ This idea of a foreboding day of judgment and a reckoning of accounts is not as concrete in 18:7 or 26:24 and totally absent in 24:19. One can conclude from this that there is a decided difference in the forms of the woes in Matthew which points to differing functions and intentions.

This variation is not so unusual since the Old Testament contains a wide spectrum of woe-type interjections which differ in form and range in tone from compassion to extreme bitterness. Only two examples need be given to illustrate this. In Isaiah 30:1, a woe is uttered over "the rebellious children" whose earthly alliances will inevitably fail and lead to disaster. It is a cry of concern over headstrong children. But in Zechariah 11:17 the tone is markedly different:

Woe to my worthless shepherd,
Who deserts the flock!
May the sword smite his arm
and his right eye!
Let his arm be wholly withered,
his right eye utterly blinded! (RSV)

The variety of forms and contexts of the Old Testament woes has prompted one scholar to point out that when calamity looms on the horizon, the woe is often the appropriate word to make its

A comparison with the Greek text of Enoch, *Apocalypsis Henochi Graece*, ed. Matthew Black, reveals a similar formal construction in extant woes of chaps. 97-103. These begin with a $\omicron\upsilon\alpha\iota\ \delta\epsilon\iota\upsilon$ introduction; however, the addressees are identified in terms of their deeds, with a participle, or in terms of their characteristics with a nominative construction. No one is specifically named as in Mt. 11:21 or 23:13 ff. All have an $\delta\tau\iota$ clause in the immediate context, and the day of destruction forms a prominent backdrop. Cf. similarly, Sir. 41:8. Schulz, *Q*, p. 62, has noted that the woes in "Q" differ from Enoch as independent prophetic speeches which announce an imminent apocalyptic judgment, whereas the Enochian woes are based on a pseudonymous authority, not that of a prophet. The relevance of the Enochian woes for Matthew 23 is the clear usage of the prophetic woe form in a maledictory context. See George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Apocalyptic Message of I Enoch 92-105", *CBQ*, XXXIX: 310-311, 1977. Cf. also Sib. Or. 3:319, 323, 492, 504, 508, 512; 4:143; 5:111, 126, 289-290, 317, 434; 7:22, 118; 8:25; 11:33, 106, 183, 204; and 12:105.

²⁵ Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p. 734, n. 20, claimed that the $\delta\tau\iota$ was little more than recitative in force, but this surely is not the case.

²⁶ On 23:38-39, see below, pp. 203-209.

announcement to the people; but the prophet's own feeling and the general tone must be discerned from the context.²⁷

A formal distinction has been determined to exist between the woes in Matthew which strongly imply condemnation, 11:21, 23:13ff. and the woes which imply sorrowful pity, 18:7, 24:19, 26:24; but at this point the conclusive factor for determining the intention of the woes for Matthew seems to be the context.

THE USAGE OF THE WOE CRY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Before considering the context of Matthew 23, it is necessary to survey the woe cry in the Old Testament in order to discover whether a pattern emerges from its usage which would shed some further light on the woes of Jesus.

The Woe Interjection

The New Testament commentators cited above have focused perhaps too much attention on the interjection itself in interpreting the intention of the woes, and they have often drawn conclusions citing little supporting evidence and making only occasional allusions to its background in the Old Testament (usually the series of woes in Isa. 5).²⁸ Actually, little information may be expected from the interjection itself; and, as it was just surmised, context is probably the most important factor. This is because the woe sound was originally a non-rational ejaculation which was an emotional reflex of pain or grief, and such an interjection is difficult to specify conceptually. As an existential response, οὐαί may mean "Alas!" "Woe!" or "Ho!" depending upon which context is selected. Recently, several scholars have delved into the confusing array of woes in the Old Testament in an attempt to define their usage and the original Sitz im Leben. The results of their study will now be discussed as it relates to the matter at hand.

²⁷ Richard J. Clifford, "The Use of *Hôy* in the Prophets", *CBQ*, XXXIII:464, 1966.

²⁸ Biblical οὐαί as an exclamation of pain or threat is unknown in classical Greek and only rarely found in Koine (Epict. 3:19.1, 22.32; P. Oxy. 413). F. Blass, A. Debrunner and Robert W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 3, claimed that οὐαί is a "Septuagintism", simply a transcription of אָוִי and אָוִי. Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise*, p. 18, n. 4, disagreed and asserted that οὐαί in Mt. 23 was an Aramaism, an exact reproduction of אָוִי. Blass, Debrunner, Funk seem closer to the truth.

The Woe Interjection in the Old Testament

The woe cry in the Old Testament does not lend itself to neat analysis. There are three Hebrew interjections variously rendered "Woe" or "Alas": הוי (52×), אֵי (23×), אֵי (2×).²⁹ Most scholars have focused upon the הוי sayings since they predominantly occur in the prophetic literature. These have been catalogued under three (four) basic categories:³⁰ 1) הוי is clearly used as a mourning cry in a funerary context where the meaning is certainly "Alas!" 2) הוי is also employed as an excited exclamation which calls someone's attention or summons him (*Anruf, Aufruf*) and is usually translated "Ah!" or "Ho!" 3) Woe also introduces a threat, an announcement of doom, which, according to Gerstenberger, "not only forecasts a catastrophe, but consciously endorses and promotes it".³¹ In these instances, the speaker is usually Yahweh and the addressed party specifically named following the prepositions ל or על and with a motive clause occasionally appended. However, Gerstenberger made a further refinement in the traditional demarcations of the usage of woe³²

²⁹ The LXX is totally indiscriminate in its translation of הוי and אֵי. It translates them both as οὐαί, ὦ or οἴμμοι, sometimes omitting them, sometimes doubling them, and sometimes adding them to the text. A notable example occurs in Hab. 2:16-19 where οὐαί and ὦ are alternated for הוי for no apparent reason. On the LXX usage of οὐαί, cf. further the analysis of Robert A. Kraft, *Septuagintal Lexicography*, pp. 169-175.

³⁰ Cf. Paul Humbert, *Problèmes du Livre d'Habacuc*, pp. 18-23; Erhard Gerstenberger, "The Woe Oracles of the Prophets", *JBL*, LXXXI:250-251, 1962; Günther Wanke, "הוי and אֵי", *ZNW*, LXXVIII:217, 1966; Richard J. Clifford, "The Use of Hôy in the Prophets", *CBQ*, XXVIII:458, 1966; J. William Whedbee, *Isaiah and Wisdom*, pp. 82-83. Waldemar Janzen, *Mourning Cry and Woe Oracle*, pp. 19f., has challenged the traditional lines of demarcation. Cf. also James G. Williams, "The Alas-Oracles of the Eighth Century Prophets", *HUCA*, XXXVIII: 75-91, 1967.

³¹ Gerstenberger, "The Woe Oracles", p. 251. He cited examples which predominantly begin with הוי: Num. 21:29; Isa. 3:9, 11; Jer. 13:27, 48:46; Ezek. 16:23, 24:6, 9; Hos. 7:13. Only Isa. 10:5, 29:1 and Ezek. 13:3, 18 cited by Gerstenberger begin with אֵי. He has been faulted for his failure to make a distinction between הוי and אֵי, see below, p. 77, n. 48.

³² Humbert, *Problèmes*, p. 19, has catalogued the usages of הוי (52× in 48 passages): 1) as an imprecatory particle: Isa. 5:8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22; 10:1, 5, 28:1, 15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1; 45:9, 10; Jer. 15:10, 22:13, 23:1, 48:1, 50:27; Ezek. 13:3, 18; 34:2; Amos 5:18, 6:1; Mic. 2:1; Nah. 3:1; Hab. 2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19; Zeph. 2:5, 3:1; Zech. 11:17 (36 instances);

2) as an exclamation of mourning: I Kgs. 13:30; Isa. 1:4; Jer. 22:18, 34:5 (7 instances);

3) as an exclamatory or exhortative particle: Isa. 1:24, 17:12, 18:1, 55:1; Jer. 30:7, 47:6; Zech. 2:10, 11 (9 instances).

Scholars vary slightly in their cataloguing of the types of woes, but the analysis of Humbert seems to be quite adequate.

because he maintained that none of the above examples conformed to the distinctive usage of הוי in the prophetic indictments. He claimed that the prophetic הוי consists of a stereotyped indictment of a group which is specified only by their evil behavior which was cause for the woe.³³ The first two categories are clearly not relevant to Matthew 23, and the third is subject to debate so that a form critical analysis of the woes is necessary before drawing conclusions about any relationship between Matthew 23 and Old Testament woes.

The analysis of Westermann. Westermann, in his examination of prophetic forms of speech, classified the *Weheruf* as a variation of the announcement of judgment; and he determined its ultimate origin to be the covenantal curse.³⁴ At first glance there does seem to be a striking affinity between the woe cry and the curse in both content and style. Both are concerned with social sins and the common life of the community in their charges. Both are self-contained units composed of הוי or ארור with a participial construction (for example, cf. Isa. 5:18ff. and Deut. 27:15ff.).³⁵ Most woes and curses are passed down in series, and Westermann inferred from the woes against enemies (cf. the curses against enemies: Gen. 9:25, 45:5-7; Num. 21:29; Judges 5:23) that there was a transition from the curse to the woe.³⁶ Could this then be the background from which the woes of Matthew 23 emerge? Matthew 5 would comprise the blessings and

³³ Gerstenberger, "Woe Oracles", p. 251. Janzen, *Mourning Cry*, pp. 20-21, in his thesis, questioned the traditional categories of the use of woe and attempted to demonstrate that they all ultimately stem from the funerary *hōy*.

³⁴ Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, pp. 190-192, gave the analysis of its form as follows: *Hōy* always introduces the accusation and is an announcement of ill *in nuce*. *Hōy* introduces the participial phrase that addresses the woe to the one doing evil. It is followed by a closely parallel or synonymous participial sentence and an explanatory sentence with a finite verb. The cry of woe is stable in form, but the explanatory adjunct exhibits great freedom. Westermann noted particularly Isa. 5, Amos 5, Hab. 2, Jer. 22:13-19, and Mic. 2:1-3 for support.

³⁵ Cf. also Judges 21:18; Gen. 24:29; Num. 24:9; Jer. 48:10; and Mal. 1:14. Humbert, *Problèmes*, pp. 20-22, provided an extensive breakdown of the structure of the prophetic woes.

³⁶ Sigmund Mowinkel, *Psalmstudien V. Segen und Fluch in Israels Kult und Psalmdichtung*, pp. 2, 54, and 119f., also connected the woe to the curse, except in a cultic context. For further analysis of the form and usage of the curse in the Old Testament, cf. Herbert Chanan Brichto, *The Problem of "Curse" in the Hebrew Bible*, and Willy Schottroff, *Der altisraelitische Fluchspruch*.

Matthew 23 would comprise the curses similar to the pattern found in Deuteronomy.³⁷

Criticisms of Westermann. Many have taken Westermann to task. Gerstenberger objected that the curses are always powerful and effective utterances (cf. Josh. 6:26, 9:23; 1 Kgs. 16:34; Judges 21:18) that were administered by an authorized office holder of some nature (cf. Gen. 27:49, 49:7; Num. 22:6; Deut. 27:14). In contrast, the woes have neither the official stamp nor the effective power. They are more private, contemplative and detached from the scene of the sin.³⁸ Gerstenberger stated further: "The woe cries, though of quite similar intention in condemning destructive deeds still seem to deplore the existence of evil, to sympathize with the wrongdoer, to throb with the recognition that an evil deed will bring about nothing but misfortune, despair and heart break".³⁹ Wolff has pointed out another disparity between the curse and the woe since the curse appears to have been rooted in the magical religious realm and was always directed against living persons, while the woe cry applied originally to the deceased. He goes so far as to suggest that the curses in Deuteronomy 27 are analogous to woes and not vice versa.⁴⁰ Clifford has also claimed that the series of woes found in prophetic literature are attributable to the catchword principle of composition rather than to an original form.⁴¹ It would seem, therefore, that the similarities between the curse and the woe are coincidental and not as substantial as Westermann believed.

³⁷ The curse is found in connection with blessings in the Qumran scrolls (cf. CD 12:22; 1QS 2:5, 7, 11, 17; 1QM 13:4; 4QTest 23). The one cursed in 1QS 2:5ff. is notably a hypocrite—the one who enters the covenant and "as he listens to the words of this covenant, he blesses himself in his heart, saying: may peace be with me when I walk in the stubbornness of my heart!" (A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, p. 75).

³⁸ Gerstenberger, "Woe Oracles", pp. 258-260. See also Williams, "The Alas-Oracles", p. 84.

The brief study of H. M. F. Büchsel, "ἀπά...", *TDNT*, I: 448-451, is instructive at this point. True cursing requires the special powers possessed by priests, wizards, chiefs, etc., a special situation of unjust persecution, special formulae, and the observance of special customs.

³⁹ Gerstenberger, "Woe Oracles", pp. 258-260.

⁴⁰ Hans Walter Wolff, *Amos the Prophet: The Man and His Background*, pp. 21-24.

⁴¹ Clifford, "Use of *Hôy*", p. 459. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, II: 39-40, stated that the series of woes in Isa. 5:8-24 "were no more delivered consecutively than those in Matthew XXIII.13ff. The connection is editorial".

The analysis of Gerstenberger. Gerstenberger has also analyzed the basic formula of the woe cry and concluded that the distinctive prophetic *והי* comes upon those who are doing such and such an action. Twenty-three of thirty-four cases isolated by Gerstenberger have an active participle, usually plural, immediately following *והי* which identifies the addressees in terms of the action which prompted the woe.⁴² Because of a lack of definite address, Gerstenberger emphasized the objective and impersonal element of the original woe cry. He argued that the "normal" prophetic woe form of speech consisted of a general and timeless indictment against historically unspecified evildoers⁴³ and concluded:

There seems to be no willful intent in the woes to call down destruction upon the people concerned. The misdeeds as expressed in the participle constructions bear the impending fortunes in themselves.⁴⁴

The continuation of the woe cry, the end form, manifests wide variety.⁴⁵ Gerstenberger concluded from this that the prophets did not create the form of the woe but used, transformed, and expanded the original form of speech (borrowed from Wisdom) so that it underwent a considerable reshaping of its content as the woe was adjusted to the prophet's message.⁴⁶ The woes in prophetic literature

⁴² Isa. 5:8, 11, 18, 20; 10:1; 29:15; 31:1; 33:1; 45:9, 10; Jer. 22:13; Ezek. 13:18; Amos 5:18; Mic. 2:1; Hab. 2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19; and Zeph. 3:1 (cf. also Isa. 1:4; Jer. 23:1; Amos 6:1).

⁴³ Gerstenberger, "Woe Oracles", p. 252.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 251. Cf. Wolff, *Amos the Prophet*, p. 19, who basically followed Gerstenberger in outlining the features of the woe: 1) the cry begins with woe and is not repeated in parallel members; 2) it is always directly attached to a plural participle; 3) the persons threatened are never named, but are designated by their deeds; 4) it occurs in a series or sequence; 5) the woe cry as such is not basically bound up with a specific announcement of punishment, because the coming disaster is clearly implied in the "woe". Also, Williams, "The Alas-Oracles", pp. 81-83.

⁴⁵ Gerstenberger, "Woe Oracles", pp. 252-253, found the woe cry continuing with a: 1) threat (Isa. 5:9, 13f., 24; 28:2-4; 30:3-5; 31:2-3; Mic. 2:3; Hab. 2:16; Zeph. 3:15); 2) lament (Isa. 1:5f.); 3) ironical question (Isa. 10:3-4); 4) proverbial saying (Isa. 29:16; 45:9b); 5) new accusation (Isa. 45:11; Jer. 22:15ff.; 23:2; Ezek. 13:4-6, 18b-19; 34:2b-4); 6) rhetorical question (Isa. 10:3-4; Amos 6:2; Hab. 2:7; 13); 7) application to world history (Hab. 2:8, 10, 16-17); 8) further indictment (Zeph. 3:3-4).

⁴⁶ The main conclusion of Gerstenberger, "Woe Oracles", pp. 254-263, is that the woes originated in the popular ethics of Wisdom. He is followed in his conclusions by Wolff, *Amos the Prophet*, p. 24, Whedbee, *Isaiah*, p. 90. Cf. Schulz, *Q*, p. 62. The argument is that since the curse has a counterpart in an effective and authoritative blessing so does the woe. The counterpart is discovered in *אשרי* which frequently occurs in Wisdom literature. The woe, then, originated from the didactic lists of acceptable and unacceptable conduct in Wisdom. However, Waldermar Janzen's challenge of this hypothesis, "*Āšrē* in the Old Testament", *HTR*, LXIII:216-226, 1965,

were highly adaptable. He claimed that as a result changes were gradually made which altered the complexion of the woe as it was adopted in later literature.⁴⁷

A study of the woes in the prophets reveals their proclivity to adapt literary forms to their own purposes. This trend continued; and Gerstenberger noted as changes the gradual introduction of a speaker, the use of personal address, and the shift of the intention of the woe from the essentially objective pronouncement of misfortune inherent in evil deeds to a genuine indictment.⁴⁸ Regardless of the various theories concerning the original Sitz im Leben of the woe and the particulars of its development, most scholars agree that there

unkindly suggested that the seed of this idea was probably to be found in Lk. 6:20-26 and not in the Old Testament. Williams, "The Alas-Oracles", pp. 85-86, agreed with Gerstenberger that the classical prophets adopted well-known traditions and ethical rules, but he claimed that they did this in order to "radicalize" them and thereby call them into question.

⁴⁷ Gerstenberger, "Woe Oracles", pp. 254-255.

⁴⁸ Ibid. Wanke, "והי and וואי", p. 215, has criticized the methodology of Westermann, Gerstenberger, and Wolff because of their indiscriminate treatment of וואי and והי. The two interjections are not synonymous. They manifest a difference in both their grammatical structure and their content which should be carefully distinguished (cf. also Clifford, "The Use of Hôy", p. 458; and Janzen, *Mourning Cry*, pp. 24-27). On the one hand, וואי is bound with the preposition in 22 of 23 cases; 19 times a pronominal suffix or its equivalent follows, often joined to a motivating clause which is introduced by כי 13 times. On the other hand, והי is bound to a preposition in only 5 cases (Jer. 30:7; 48:1; 50:27; Ezek. 13:3, 18).

As to content, וואי is found in Wisdom, historical and hymnic literature, as well as prophetic and is usually addressed to specific persons. והי is found only in the prophetic literature with the lone exception of IKgs. 13:30. Wanke concluded from the analysis of the content that וואי should be understood as a cry of dread, lamentation and peril; whereas והי stems from the mourning of the dead and is used for strengthening prophetic invectives.

Janzen's study, which traces the woe of prophetic speech ultimately to the mourning cry, is convincing. This mourning cry was picked up first by Amos who employed it in anticipation of the destruction in the Day of the Lord which unexpectedly would be directed against Israel (Amos 5:18-20, 6:1-7). Thus, the mourning cry became a woe oracle. This was also proposed earlier by Clifford, "The Use of Hôy", p. 459, but not referred to by Janzen. Williams, "The Alas-Oracles", p. 86, also maintained that the hôy-cry derived from the ancient lament. He wrote: "...when those to whom the prophets preached heard the initial exclamation, 'hôy!', they would have immediately associated this mentally and emotionally with mourning for the dead. The association of hôy with lamentation would have been especially striking to the listeners, for it would have brought into vivid relief the pronouncement of Israel's death".

It can easily be seen how the lament of death was particularly suited to a prophetic indictment since it dramatically disclosed "the dire consequences" of evil conduct. Cf., also James Luther Mays, *Amos*, p. 103, and G. Ernest Wright, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 32. The entire analysis of Gerstenberger is misdirected from Janzen's

was a development which was increasingly denunciatory.⁴⁹ Westermann concluded that the woe developed from the curse, while Gerstenberger concluded that eventually the woe developed into a curse-like form; and Janzen noted an increasing vengeance-thrust that eclipsed any evidence of a mourning quality.⁵⁰

It can be concluded that the use of woe had developed an increasingly imprecatory character within the Old Testament and beyond. The series of woes in Enoch 93-103, for example, are akin to curses. It is probably the case that the woes in Matthew 23 and Luke 11 also fall into this pattern. This cannot be demonstrated from a formal comparison of Old Testament woes. One can only point to the increasing trend toward the use of a woe interjection as a malediction, but one can also point to exceptions to this trend.⁵¹ The use of

perspective. He has shown that the emphasis on the participial element of the woe form is not as significant as Gerstenberger believed, *Mourning Cry*, p. 81.

⁴⁹ Clifford, "The Use of *Hôy*", p. 463, claimed that there was a later development toward a denunciatory usage of the woe which is reflected in Mt. 23 and Lk. 11. He maintained that it was "the woe to" formula in the *New Testament* that led translators to see a denunciatory element in all Old Testament instances of *וָיִי*. Janzen, *Mourning Cry*, p. 90, also recognized a development toward an increased bitterness in tone, but rather than being an exilic or post exilic phenomenon, as Clifford surmised, he thought that this development had its seeds already in Isaiah's usage.

⁵⁰ Janzen, *Woe Oracle*, p. 90.

⁵¹ One such exception is the incident recorded by Josephus in *Bell.* VI:301-311 about a man who announced doom for Jerusalem nearly eight years before the war. This occurred during a time of peace and prosperity when the "rude peasant", Jesus, son of Ananias, began to proclaim a voice against Jerusalem, the sanctuary, the bride and bridegroom, and against all the people (cf. Jer. 7:34). This continued day and night so that the leading citizens, concerned about such "ill-omened" words, had him arrested. When he continued, they brought him before the Roman governor and he was scourged. Josephus reported that with each stroke he cried mournfully αἰαὶ Ἰεροσολύμοις and refused to defend himself. This woe cry was repeated for seven years and five months as he walked through Jerusalem, stoically immune to the vicissitudes of life. During the siege of Jerusalem he shouted: αἰαὶ πάλιν τῇ πόλει καὶ τῷ λαῷ καὶ τῷ ναῷ; and when he added καμοί, he was immediately struck dead by a stone hurled from a *balista*. Josephus moralized that God showed the people the way of salvation through premonitory signs (such as this prophet), but they owed their destruction to follies of their own choosing.

The woe cry of this itinerant prophet strongly suggests sorrow and pity and is reminiscent of the mourning cries of early prophets. This might be parallel to Jesus' lament over Jerusalem. But it should be noted that Josephus recorded an oral and, therefore, existential response, whereas the Matthean woes show every sign of being a literary composition after the manner of a prophetic woe oracle; and even if this αἰαὶ does manifest sorrow and pity, it does not seem to be redemptive in intention—it was simply a pronouncement of doom. It should also be noted that these words were considered to be a threat by the leading citizens. For whatever reason, the words were viewed as ominous, deserving severe chastisement; and, once again, we see the woe cry integrally associated with the announcement of imminent destruction.

the woe is so diverse that one is ultimately thrown back to the context to determine its intention. The woe implies imminent calamity for those who are addressed, yet the reason given for the woe takes many forms of expression and the attitude of the prophet toward the coming disaster varies from vindictiveness to lamentation. The Old Testament pattern of the menacing prophet is certainly the background for the woes in chap. 23, and there is no need to look elsewhere, but the recognition of this does not automatically unveil the intention of the woes in Matthew.

The analysis of Janzen. Janzen discovered three very important contextual features of the woe oracle which transcended formulaic distinctness and may have some bearing on understanding the context of Matthew 23. He listed them in a descending order of certainty. 1) There is a characterization of the addressee, whether he is within Israel or a foreign enemy, as one "who acts in self-reliant independence of the sovereignty of Yahweh". This self-reliance manifests itself in a false security. Or, it is also manifested in a failure to obey covenantal obligations toward the poor, or in political disloyalty to Yahweh. We might also add as another manifestation of this self-reliance, the arrogant defalcation of responsibility by the authorized leaders of the people (cf. Jer. 22:13; 23:1; Ezek. 13:3, 18; 34:2; Nah. 3:1; Hab. 2:9; and Zeph. 3:1). 2) Janzen noted also a "Day of the Lord" context, a time when the self-styled sovereignty will be brought low when confronted with the greater sovereignty of Yahweh. 3) The confrontation is often expressed in terms of a reversal of imagery (*Talionstil*) which occurs in its most direct form: "You have done X; therefore X will be done to you".⁵²

Janzen conceded that these features are not unique and are found in prophetic contexts other than woe oracles, but he contended that the woe context distinctly "... shows the contrast between the pinnacles of haughty self-reliance and the depths of humiliation on Yahweh's

⁵² Janzen, *Mourning Cry*, pp. 81-82. An excellent exegesis of the woes from which these contextual factors were discovered comprises pp. 40-80.

Williams, "The Alas-Oracles", p. 87, also discerned a similarity in the motifs of the eighth century prophets' woe oracles. He noted:

The people, and especially certain leaders, are over-confident, even arrogant (Amos 5:18, 6:1-2; Isa. 5:19ff.; Mic. 2:3). Many lead lives of thoughtless luxury and revelry, unconcerned about the people's fate (Amos 6:4ff.; Isa. 5:11ff.). They seize land and extend their holdings (Isa. 5:8ff.; Mic. 2:1ff.). Every oracle proclaims Yahweh's imminent action, a time of judgment—in fact, a decree of desolation and exile (Amos 6:7; Isa. 5:9, 14; 10:3; 28:2; Mic. 2:4).

day”.⁵³ The contextual features of the Old Testament woe oracle as outlined by Janzen seem to be present in both Matthew 23 and 11:20-24. In 11:20-24, the self-reliance is manifested in the obdurate refusal to acknowledge the significance of the mighty works of Jesus (an impenitence outlined in 11:16-19). The Judgment Day is specifically referred to in vv. 22 and 24 when it will be manifest that the pagan cities of Tyre and Sidon will fare better than the Israelite cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida. The towns where most of his wonders were wrought will plummet to the depths of humiliation. Because of their refusal to repent, God will reject them.

The woes in Matthew 23 announce the coming humiliation of those who in a self-styled sovereignty sat on Moses' throne, bound heavy loads on others, and scrambled for social rank—the scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. Matthew 23 fits well the pattern found in the Old Testament where woes are pronounced against false leaders who forsook the covenant responsibilities yet who complacently continued in a false sense of security. Recognition of this helps explain what otherwise seems to be the awkward inclusion of vv. 11-12, which appear to be tangential to the thrust of the rest of the discourse. The final humiliation of those who have exalted themselves is precisely what concerns v. 12. It marks the transition to the woes; and the first woe in v. 13 is not so abrupt as it might appear if it is realized that the following woes simply confirm the threat, “whoever exalts himself will be humbled”.⁵⁴ This is the basic point of attack in the woes. They are aimed at those who act independently of the will of God and yet live in the complacent false security expressed in 23:30. This independence is manifested overtly in the haughty tyranny that slams shut the door of the kingdom of heaven.

The presence of the Day of the Lord context is found in 23:37-24:2. The interpretation of these verses is debated and will be taken up later, but it does seem to this writer that the woes are flanked by a reversal of imagery. Those who sit in the first seats, and who are honored by titles—their house will be forsaken (23:38).

The context of Matthew 23, therefore, seems to conform to Janzen's analysis of contextual features in Old Testament woe oracles. However, another feature is present which is quite significant. Janzen pointed to many instances where woes were pronounced in the context of

⁵³ Janzen, *Mourning Cry*, p. 82.

⁵⁴ Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 488.

murder. The guilty party had temporarily escaped, and those close to the victim uttered a woe as an announcement of foreseen or planned vengeance when the one who now considered himself safe and secure from all alarms would be brought low in a day of reckoning. His apparent security would mean destruction. Many woes were addressed to murderers, literally or metaphorically (Isa. 10:5; 31:1; Jer. 23:1; Ezek. 24:6-14; Nah. 3:1; and Hab. 2:12), or to those who particularly considered themselves safe from vengeance (Amos 6:1; Isa. 5:18ff., 10:12, 29:15; Jer. 49:7; and Hab. 2:9). Often an avenger was summoned by Yahweh, or Yahweh himself would avenge the sin (Isa. 28:1ff., 17:12; Jer. 50:25f.; 51:1; Nah. 3:2; and Hab. 2:7).⁵⁵ This fits precisely the context of Matthew 23. There is an element of self-styled sovereignty and false security, but, preeminently, an accusation of murder. Jesus accuses his adversaries of being "the sons of those who murdered the prophets", that is, of the same nature (23:31). They will kill and crucify, scourge and persecute Jesus' messengers (23:34). In fact, they have always killed the prophets and stoned those sent to them (23:37; cf. 21:35). The phrase in 23:35, ἐφ' ὧμας πάντων αἱμάτων, is taken up again by Matthew in 27:25 so that it becomes clear that these people bear the blood-guilt of Jesus, the son of God, as well. They may believe themselves to be immune to vengeance by boasting: "Had we lived in the days of the prophets, unlike our fathers, we would have obeyed". The irony is that they live in the days of the Messiah, and their guilt far surpasses that of their fathers and completes the measure. They will meet with vengeance—not simply human revenge—but the vengeance of God which has an altogether different ethical and emotional tone.⁵⁶

THE MATTHEAN CONTEXT OF THE WOES IN MATTHEW 23

Certain parallels with the contextual features of the Old Testament woe oracles have been discovered and the increasing imprecatory usage of the woe cry was demonstrated, but to determine Matthew's understanding of the woes of Jesus it is necessary to probe the Matthean context.

⁵⁵ Janzen, *Mourning Cry*, p. 83. This is a common element in the Enochian woes where "the righteous" will be avenged (En. 94:6-11; 95:7; 97:5; 98:9-14; 99:15 and 100:17).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34, n. 21.

The Judgmental Tone of Jesus in Matthew

It should first be appreciated that it is not out of character for the Matthean Jesus to be threatening and judgmental. Vivid and stark warnings of ultimate destruction for the disobedient are frequently found in Jesus' teaching. Salt that has lost its savor will be thrown out and trodden under foot (5:13). Many will enter the wide gate that leads to destruction (7:13). Trees which do not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire (7:19, cf. 3:10). The barren fig tree was cursed by Jesus in 21:19. Every plant not divinely sanctioned (notably the Pharisees) will be rooted up (15:13). Even the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (8:12). The latter phrase is a favorite of Matthew,⁵⁷ which recurs in combination with the furnace of fire destined for evil doers (13:42, 13:50), twice more with outer darkness (22:13, 25:30), and, finally, with the hypocrites (24:51). Jesus also declares that those who cause stumbling in others will be thrown into the eternal fire (18:8-9, cf. 5:29-30). A stern judgment marks the conclusion of the section composed of chaps. 21-25: "Depart from me cursed (κατηραμένοι) into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (25:41, cf. 25:46). In most cases the judgmental tone is either heightened by Matthew when compared to its parallels or it belongs to Matthew's *Sondergut*. What is remarkable is that nearly all are ostensibly addressed to the disciples and implicitly to Matthew's community. The exception in 15:13 presents the Pharisees as a negative example for the disciples.⁵⁸ Thus, it should not be considered in the least surprising that Jesus, who called his chief disciple "Satan", should be portrayed by Matthew as expressing a vitriolic judgment on those who not only refused their own salvation, but impeded salvation for others, and are envisioned as actively persecuting the messengers of Jesus at a later time. In fact, far from being surprising, it is anticipated by Matthew's structure of chaps. 21-25.

The Judgmental Tone of Matthew 21-22

Schweizer, with his analysis of chaps. 21-25, has rung the bell.⁵⁹ It cannot be stressed enough how important the parables of chaps. 21-22

⁵⁷ Lk. 13:28 is the only other occurrence of this phrase in the gospels.

⁵⁸ Cf. below, p. 122.

⁵⁹ Eduard Schweizer, "Matthäus 21-25", *Orientierung an Jesus. Zur Theologie der Synoptiker. Für Josef Schmid*, pp. 364-371. This is essentially summarized in Schweizer, *Matthew*, pp. 401-403 and in the commentary. Cf. above, p. 30-32.

are for interpreting the intention of chap. 23 and the woes. Kingsbury observed that after the two parables of the Wicked Tenants and the Wedding Feast, the reader has been prepared for what is to come in the passion narrative with the rejection and death of Jesus Messiah, son of God.⁶⁰ But the reader has been prepared for more than that. Through the careful use of foreshadowing, the reader has been prepared by these parables for the final rejection of the leaders of Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem (including the parable of the Two Sons, so that three judgment parables stand together).⁶¹

The chief priests and Pharisees themselves announced the punishment and fate the nation must endure for its shameless treatment of the son of God:⁶²

⁴⁰ὅταν οὖν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος, τί ποιήσῃ τοῖς γεωργοῖς ἐκείνοις; ⁴¹λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, κακοὺς κακῶς ἀπολέσει αὐτούς, καὶ τὸν ἀμπελῶνα ἐκδώσεται ἄλλοις γεωργοῖς, οἵτινες ἀποδώσουσιν αὐτῷ τοὺς καρποὺς ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς αὐτῶν (21:40-41).

Then, Jesus pronounced that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you (presumably his audience of chief priests and Pharisees, cf. 21:23, 45) and given to a nation producing the fruits of the kingdom (21:43, without parallel). If the reader still did not perceive the meaning, Matthew has the chief priests and Pharisees themselves state that Jesus spoke τὰς παραβολὰς (Mk. 12:12, τὴν παραβολήν;

⁶⁰ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, p. 73.

⁶¹ Schweizer, "Matthäus 21-25", p. 365. This is not something which suddenly bursts into view in chap. 21; as Ellis, *Matthew*, p. 117, has well said: "Jesus' rejection of pseudo-Israel is foreshadowed in ch. 1-10, made explicit in ch. 11-13, and taken for granted in the rest of the gospel". He has cited as evidence of this: Mt. 3:8-12; 8:10-12; the whole of the narrative in chaps. 11-12, particularly 11:25-27, 12:43-45 and 12:46-50; 13:1, 11, 13; 15:13-14; and 16:12. On Matthew's technique of foreshadowing, cf. Charles H. Lohr, "Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew", *CBQ*, XXII, 411-414, 1961; and Benno Przybylski, "The Role of Mt. 3:13-4:11 in the Structure and Theology of the Gospel of Matthew", *BibThBull*, IV:225, 1974. Lohr remarks that there is an unobtrusive preparation of the mind of his listeners; through simple repetitions and rearrangements, a whole net of expectations and conjectures is created in the listener's mind, "so that each new scene and each new collection of sayings is approached with a definite predisposition" (p. 413).

⁶² On the Matthean redaction of Mt. 21:33-46, cf. Wolfgang Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel. Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums*, pp. 55-65; Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit. Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Matthäus*, pp. 110-113 and 196-170; Walker, *Heilsgeschichte*, pp. 79-83; Sjef van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew*, pp. 54-58; Hubert Frankemölle, *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi. Studien zur Form und Traditionsgeschichte des "Evangeliums" nach Matthäus*, pp. 247-256. On the redaction of 21:28-22:14, as a whole, cf. van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders*, pp. 47ff.

Lk. 20:19, τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην)⁶³ about them (περὶ αὐτῶν, while Mk. and Lk. have πρὸς αὐτούς). In the parable of the Wedding Feast, Matthew has added the detail that “the king was angry”, and he sent his troops to destroy (ἀπόλεσεν, cf. 21:41) those murderers *and* their city.⁶⁴ Matthew has carefully foreshadowed the future role of the Jewish leaders in the three passion predictions (16:21, 17:22, 20:18). Twice these leaders plot to destroy Jesus (26:3-5; 27:1), and once again they plot together after his death (27:65). It is the same leaders, who are portrayed in the thinly veiled allegories of chaps. 21-22 as deserving severe punishment, who are also condemned in chap. 23. The woes follow, therefore, quite naturally, condemning them openly and specifically. The ruthless severity of the parables would apply also to chap. 23.

After chaps. 21-22, therefore, the reader expects the harsh judgment the woes entail. The leaders have made the Temple a den of robbers, which recalls Jeremiah 7:11-15 where it is prophesied that the house will be destroyed and the people cast out of sight.⁶⁵ In 21:18-19 the barren fig tree (Israel, cf. Hos. 9:10, 16; Mic. 7:1) is cursed, and finally, at the close of the parable of the Two Sons, Jesus proclaims that the taxcollectors and harlots will go into the kingdom of God before the Jewish leaders because they did not believe John’s preaching even after seeing (21:32). They will not enter the kingdom (21:32, 23:13), and the kingdom will be taken away (21:43). This can mean only damnation.

The Judgmental Tone of Matthew 23

There are also certain words and phrases in Matthew 23 which betray the fact that the sevenfold woe is of a far more final and vituperative nature than that of a sorrowful lament. There are terms used in these woes which, explicitly or implicitly, are associated with final damnation in Matthew’s gospel. The derisive appellation, “hypocrite”, occurs six times (“hypocrisy” in 23:28). Without going into

⁶³ van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders*, p. 51, sees this as an adaptation to the context by Matthew.

⁶⁴ Many have noted the incongruity which this detail introduces. The “supper” would grow cold while the troops engage in a military campaign.

⁶⁵ In the cleansing of the Temple, Matthew omits the statement in Mk. 11:17 from Isa. 56:17 that it shall be called a “house of prayer” for all nations probably because it is to be destroyed, cf. H. Benedict Green, “The Structure of St. Matthew’s Gospel”, *StEv*, IV:52 (TU, 102), 1968.

its thematic significance in the gospel, one reference will suffice to reveal the correlation of hypocrite with damnation in Matthew's mind. The drunken and cruel servant of 24:48-50 is caught in his unfaithfulness by the master's sudden return and his punishment consists of being put "with the hypocrites", where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (24:51). In this passage, notably *after* chap. 23 where "hypocrite" is so prominent, "with the hypocrites" is synonymous with "the damned".

It is implied in v. 15 that the scribes and Pharisees are "sons of Hell" because their proselytes are doubly so. "Sons of Hell" is a semitism which means those who deserve the punishment of Hell,⁶⁶ and according to Jeremias, γεέννα had at this point in time come to signify the place for eternal torment.⁶⁷ The question of v. 33 asks rhetorically how they will possibly escape the judgment of γεέννα.

The woes are continued in v. 16 with the scribes and Pharisees addressed as blind guides;⁶⁸ and the characterization "blind" is repeated in v. 17, 19, 24, 26. It is clearly a spiritual blindness which reflects a spiritual darkness (cf. 6:22-23), and inevitably the blind guides will fall into a pit with their charges.⁶⁹ The term μωροί is also ascribed to the scribes and Pharisees in v. 17 and refers to a spiritual foolishness. This is the term which, according to 5:22, prompts an eschatological punishment for whoever utters it, while the one who calls another ῥακά is dealt with through earthly justice. The usual explanation for this differentiation in punishment is that the term "fool" was applied in the Old Testament mainly to the godless (Pss. 14:1, 94:8; Isa. 32:5-6; Deut. 32:6; Jer. 5:21), and one should not presume to judge another's relationship to God.⁷⁰ However, Jesus, as the son of God, may do so, and his judgment is decisive.

⁶⁶ Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, p. 18, n. 4; cf. also Hoad, "On Matthew xxiii. 15", p. 212; and C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, pp. 174-175.

⁶⁷ Joachim Jeremias, "γεέννα", *TDNT*, I:658. This was certainly the destination of the *Minim*, who, according to B. R. Sh. 17a, would be punished for all generations because they rejected Torah, denied the resurrection, and abandoned the ways of the community. See also B. *Ber.* 10a.

⁶⁸ Matthew, of the synoptics, is the only one to pick up the metaphorical idea of blindness which is frequently found in the prophets (Isa. 42:18, 43:8, 56:10; Jer. 6:17; Ezek. 3:17, 33:7). Cf. Sand, *Das Gesetz*, pp. 89-90.

⁶⁹ Mt. 15:14. A judgmental overtone for βόθρυος can be found in Isa. 24:17-22 (LXX).

⁷⁰ Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 119.

In 23:27, the scribes and Pharisees are likened to tombs, full of dead men's bones. According to Num. 19:13 and 16, whoever touches the dead and does not cleanse himself is cut off from Israel. The implication is that the scribes and Pharisees are more than simply unclean; they are the agency which causes uncleanness and separation from God—contact with them entails defilement. They are then accused of being full of hypocrisy and ἀνομία in v. 28. Those who work ἀνομία are bluntly told by Jesus, "I never knew you, depart from me", despite their supposedly mighty works (7:23). Also in 13:41, those who do ἀνομία will be gathered out and cast into the furnace of fire. Being full of ἀνομία must, therefore, be closely associated with inevitable damnation.

From the use of these terms in Matthew 23 one can see that the element of judgment and eschatological punishment subtly pervades the woes against the scribes and Pharisees when interpreted from the perspective of the entire gospel. There is pointed finality in the cumulative force of the charges and epithets. However, the most damning charge of all is the final accusation in v. 31 that these scribes and Pharisees are of the same murderous nature as their fathers. The reproaches have become progressively passionate and abusive until they reach their climax in v. 31. The theme of killing is the nexus that appears to bind vv. 29-37 together,⁷¹ as the guilt of hypocrisy is specifically replaced with that of murder.⁷² At the conclusion of the woes, the scribes and Pharisees are not told to repent; on the contrary, v. 31 seems to exclude the possibility of repentance,⁷³ while the διὰ τοῦτο of v. 34 implies further inevitability. In v. 32 there is a command to fulfill the measure of their fathers' guilt which presupposes that divine judgment ensues when a certain measure of guilt has been filled to over-flowing.⁷⁴ The guilt which they bear is, further, the guilt of shedding innocent righteous blood which is avenged by God.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu*, p. 478.

⁷² Minear, "False Prophecy", p. 90.

⁷³ van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders*, p. 24.

⁷⁴ Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 52.

⁷⁵ According to Gen. 9:5; II Sam. 4:11; II Kgs. 9:7; Ps. 9:12; and Hos. 1:4, unexpiated bloodguilt is punished by God who is the ultimate avenger. Also in Gen. 4:10; Job 16:18; Isa. 26:21; and Ezek. 24:7-9, unavenged blood cries out to heaven for vindication. Cf. also Asmp. M. 9:7; En. 47:1-4; and the account in Midr. Lam. Proem XXIII (cf. Midr. Lam. 1:16 and 51) of Zechariah's blood crying out. Retribution may also be exacted from descendants of those who have bloodguilt

Conclusion

As a result of the contextual analysis of Matthew 23, this writer would concur with Haenchen's opinion that, for Matthew, οὐαὶ here connotes a powerful and denunciatory judgment akin to a curse. This denunciation was more than a prophetic warning of imminent calamity; it was a pronouncement of judgment by the son of God.⁷⁶ From the contextual evidence of the terms used by Matthew in chapter 23, it becomes clear that the meaning οὐαὶ is "woe unto you!": a woe which promoted and affirmed their destruction.

However, this need not imply that Jesus himself uttered the woe out of vindictiveness. It is important to recognize that the intention of Jesus, who is portrayed in the gospels as pronouncing woes, be distinguished from the intention of the evangelist who recorded the woes. This is particularly true in the case of Matthew 23 which, it is believed, represents the evangelist's theological perspective in that he wove the elements of tradition into a common fabric.⁷⁷ Yet perhaps the original intention of Jesus when he pronounced woes on his adversaries (and his people) may tentatively be recovered by applying here the insights of James G. Williams on prophetic consciousness.⁷⁸ He developed the thesis that irony always originates from a conflict, and that the prophets, "caught between their convictions of the divine judgment of old orders of meaning and identification with their contemporaries, achieved a certain liberation from their dilemma through the use of irony".⁷⁹ This idea was substantiated by a careful analysis of the *hōy*-utterances of the prophets. To be sure, the woes were deadly serious in nature; catastrophe loomed on the horizon and could be averted only through swift repentance.

(II Sam. 3:28-29, 21:1; I Kgs. 21:29; II Kgs. 9:25-26, 24:4). The emphasis on *righteous* blood is certainly due to Matthean redaction since it occurs four times in Mt. 23:28, 29 and 35. Cf. Mt. 21:41 and 22:7 for a similar attitude toward divine retribution.

⁷⁶ Kingsbury, *Matthew*, has cogently argued that the Son of God is the key christological term for Matthew which comprehends every stage of Jesus' life. Cf. particularly pp. 126-127.

⁷⁷ Cf. the judgment of Wilhelm Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen der Redaktion von Matthäus 23", *Orientierung und Jesus. Zur Theologie der Synoptiker. Für Josef Schmid*, p. 298, who claimed that the evangelist evinced a "pious aversion" for altering older and previously established formulations from the tradition, but also a determination for giving a new interpretation to the words of Jesus and the tradition to fit the new situation and needs of the community. Cf. Mt. 13:52.

⁷⁸ James G. Williams, "Irony and Lament: Clues to Prophetic Consciousness", *Semeia*, VIII:51-71, 1977.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

But Williams detected an element of divine pathos in the woes as both God and the prophet suffer because of their identification with the people Israel, who are pronounced on the verge of death. Relief from the tension created by the converging emotions of anger and pain was sought through the means of comic irony which, at the same time, proclaimed judgment.⁸⁰

From this insight into prophetic consciousness, one may venture a conclusion about the original intention of Jesus, since the woes attributed to him drip with ironic overtones. Those who control access to the kingdom of heaven exclude both themselves and others. Their hard-won proselytes are converted into sons of double perdition. Minor details of the oral tradition are scrupulously observed, while the major requirements of the law are left unattended. The obligations concerning external purity are carefully discharged, while disregard of internal purity ultimately nullifies all such fastidiousness. The pious reverence for the tombs of the dead prophets ultimately betrays the same murderous nature which originally put them into those tombs. Images of life: the kingdom of heaven, the temple, the altar, tithing, purity, Jerusalem, the day of Yahweh, are turned into images of death: Gehenna, blindness, murder, desolation. The basic ironic thrust of these woes, in all likelihood, reflects the attitude of Jesus; and, if the thesis of Williams is as sound as this writer believes, this ironic element in these woes would reflect a prophetic consciousness that is caught "in the middle".⁸¹ The dilemma created by the announcement of the death of the old order in which Jesus lived and of contemporaries with whom he identified was alleviated for Jesus by the use of irony.

Williams also reached the conclusion: "... the elements of humor and paronomasia in the deadly serious alas-utterances could not have been there apart from the prophetic conviction that Israel would eventually be brought back to life again so that the suffering of Israel and of God would be ended".⁸² From this conclusion about eighth century prophets it may be inferred that Jesus had a similar

⁸⁰ Williams, *ibid.*, p. 65, noted that the basic ironic device was the repetition of images whose "apparent" or "expected" meaning is reversed. Also other devices, such as paronomasia, attribution of purported thoughts or quotes, and satirical exaggeration were utilized.

⁸¹ Cf. S. Hopper, "Irony—the Pathos of the Middle", *Cross Currents*, XII: 31-40, 1962.

⁸² Williams, "Irony", p. 66.

conviction, which many commentators have intuitively recognized from their mental image of Jesus but which so many elements of the text seem to belie. Assuming that the woes in Matthew 23 and Luke 11 represent the substance of woes uttered by Jesus, it can be concluded that they were born of both indignation *and* pain. They were aimed at producing repentance, knowing that repentance would not come. The mental anguish which this would have aroused was relieved through the use of irony. Conversely, the presence of irony in the woes implies the presence of mental anguish in the prophet.

On the other hand, the contextual features of Matthew 23 that were contributed by the redactor indicate that the situation for him had substantially changed from that of Jesus. The ironic elements remain, but there is less of a hint of pain and more of the element of finality. Matthew is presenting the life and ministry of the one he believed was the supreme messenger to Israel, the son of God, who was also to be the final judge of the world (19:28, 25:31-46, and 28:18). From Matthew's perspective, the coming disaster implied by the woes against the leaders of Israel had already come to pass with the destruction of Jerusalem; and the mission to Israel had ended in failure.⁸³ To state this at this point admittedly previews the conclusion reached from the contextual analysis of the entire chapter, and it needs to be borne out in the investigation to follow; but it helps explain the vituperative elements in the woes. Kinniburgh remarked significantly that for Matthew's church: "...faced with the problem of the failure of the Jewish mission and the ruin of the Jewish nation, the attribution of such a message of condemnation to Jesus was a source of comfort, even if it were to prove an embarrassment to later generations".⁸⁴ For Matthew, the woes represent the proleptic final judgment upon the false leaders of a recalcitrant

⁸³ Douglas R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, pp. 128-129 and 146-149.

⁸⁴ E. Kinniburgh, "Hard Sayings - III", *Theology*, LXVI:416, 1963. Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, p. 245, argued earlier that the violent accusation against the Jews must be seen as having "retrospective significance" calculated to explain why Jesus was rejected by the Jews. Cf. further, Kingsbury, *Structure*, pp. 18-19 and 155. Ellis, *Matthew*, p. 117, asserted that the problem posed by Jesus' rejection by the Jews was a matter of theological concern for Paul, certainly (Rom. 9-11), for Luke (Acts 28:23-29), and for John (Jn. 12:37-50), but not for Matthew. This conclusion does not hold up under scrutiny.

Israel by Jesus himself. Whether or not that corresponded to the original intent or understanding of Jesus, it seems to have explained to Matthew the extraordinary state of affairs in his day—God's apparent rejection of an old order and His kingdom given over to another nation which would produce its fruits.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHARGE OF HYPOCRISY IN MATTHEW 23

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the meaning of the charge “hypocrites” in chap. 23. An attempt will be made to determine the applicability of this charge as a characterization of the scribes and Pharisees, and to determine its significance for Matthew’s own community.

THE CHARGE OF HYPOCRISY AS A MATTHEAN ADDITION

With the stereotyped formula οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι the scribes and Pharisees are lumped together under the one heading ὑποκριταί (vv. 13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29) in Matthew. It is commonly assumed that this structural unit is entirely attributable to Matthew’s editorial hand.¹ It does appear fairly certain that the conjunction of the scribes and Pharisees is Matthean;² and their characterization as “hypocrites” also appears at first glance to be a Matthean addition—it is absent in the parallel Lucan woes, and it is more prominent in Matthew than any other gospel.³ Many have consequently assumed that the term “hypocrite” is Matthew’s distinctive *Scheltwort* for Jewish officialdom as it is particularly represented by the scribes and Pharisees⁴ and that the inclusion of ὑποκριταί in the preamble of

¹ Sjef van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew*, p. 19, for example, stated that “such a repetition in a structural unit can only be ascribed to the work of an editor”, but left the explanation why this must be so to the reader’s imagination.

² Cf. above pp. 41-46.

³ Ὑποκριτής occurs in Mt. 13/Mk. 1/Lk. 3; ὑπόκρισις: Mt. 1/Mk. 1/Lk. 1. Excluding the 6 occurrences of “hypocrite” in chap. 23 for the moment, the three occurrences of ὑποκριταί in 6:2, 5, 16 seem to belong to the pre-Matthean tradition. So Ulrich Wilckens, “ὑποκρίνομαι...”, *TDNT*, VIII:568, n. 47. The charge in Mt. 7:5; 15:7; 22:18 is paralleled in Lk. 6:42; Mk. 7:6; 12:15 respectively (cf. Lk. 20:20), and, thus, also belongs to a pre-Matthean tradition. Only Mt. 23:28 (ὑπόκρισις) and 24:51 appear to be distinctively Matthean, without a synoptic parallel, while Luke contains three instances of the charge without synoptic parallel (Lk. 12:1, 56; 13:15).

⁴ Ernst Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu: Eine Erklärung des Markus-Evangeliums und der kanonischen Parallelen*, p. 427, described “hypocrite” as “der Lieblings Vorwurf des Mt gegen die Pharisäer und Schriftgelehrten”. Alexander Sand, *Das Gesetz und die Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Evangeliums nach Matthäus*, pp. 91-92, concluded that Matthew used the title almost as an exclusive designation of his opponents the Pharisees even when they are not explicitly mentioned as, for example, in 6:2, 5, 16. Cf. also Alan Hugh McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 74, who termed it a “class designation”.

the woes is due to his redaction.⁵ The predominance of the word “hypocrite” in chap. 23 has also influenced the evaluation of its significance for Matthew. Since Matthew 23 is widely considered to be a polemical chapter, “hypocrite” is widely considered to be a polemical vilification of the opponents of Matthew’s church historicized in the opponents of Jesus—they are and were pious frauds. These assumptions will be subjected to scrutiny in this chapter. Because the reference to hypocrisy is so prominent in chap. 23 (8 of 14 instances, excluding 23:14), how one interprets the meaning of hypocrisy will affect the interpretation of the woes. Conversely, the content of the woes should be just as crucial in determining Matthew’s understanding of hypocrisy.

The Absence of the Charge in 23:16

The first topic for discussion concerns the question whether the charge of hypocrisy should be attributable entirely to Matthew’s editorial hand. The epithet is absent in the parallels in Mark 12:37-40 and Luke 11:37-52, but it is also absent in Matthew 23:16 which gives every evidence of having been stylized by Matthew into a woe from a traditional saying originating from a time when the Temple was standing, and which Bultmann allowed might be traceable to Jesus.⁶ It would seem curious, if “scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites” had been joined together by Matthew, that he would have omitted in v. 16 his own formulation of the address when he took this unit and transformed it into one of the woes. If γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι, ὑποκριταί is indeed a redactional phrase, why does it not appear in every woe? Why is it replaced by ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοὶ οἱ λέγοντες in

⁵ Adolf Harnack, *The Sayings of Jesus: The Second Source of St. Matthew and St. Luke*, p. 99; Ernst Haenchen, “Matthäus 23”, ZTK, XLVIII: 46, 1951; G. D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 31; Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit. Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Matthäus*, p. 139, n. 9; Rolf Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium*, p. 69; Douglas R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, pp. 81-82; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp. 18-19; Siegfried Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten*, p. 96; F. Heinrichs, *Die Komposition der antipharisäischen und anti-rabbinischen Weherede bei den Synoptikern*, pp. 60-64, according to Schulz, p. 96. Often cited is the fact that the vocative, ὑποκριταί, represents an editorial alteration by Matthew of the reproach found in Mk. 7:6; 12:15 (cf. Mt. 15:7; 22:18).

⁶ Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, p. 146; Haenchen, “Matthäus 23”, p. 51; Reinhart Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium*, p. 79; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp. 104-106; Sand, *Das Gesetz*, p. 84. Cf. below, pp. 132-136.

v. 16? It is possible that Matthew was intent on the phrase ὀφθαλμοὶ τυφλοί,⁷ but v. 16 does tend to weaken the argument that ὑποκριταὶ is Matthew's deliberate insertion into the preamble of the woe.

The Case for Luke's Omission of the Charge

Wilckens has cautioned against viewing "hypocrites" as an editorial addition and advanced the likelihood that it was already present in Q. It is certainly precarious to argue that Matthew has added the reproach simply on the basis that it is absent in the Lucan parallel.⁸ An examination of the Lucan woes tends to lend support for his omission of the reproach rather than for Matthew's addition of it. Luke was not unfamiliar with the epithet "hypocrite" as a charge against the scribes and Pharisees.⁹ This fact would make it appear unlikely that Luke removed "hypocrites" from the woe address, but it is not unlikely that Luke was sensitive to the setting of the woes in his gospel. It might have caused some problem for Luke to have Jesus, as a dinner guest of a Pharisee, subject his host not only to unexpected woes but also to the contemptuous charge of hypocrisy. The introduction to the woes in Luke 11:38-41 manifests such a sensitivity. Luke could not easily have Jesus uttering a prophetic woe against his host before he even sat down to eat. Therefore, Luke's solution seems to have been to modify vv. 39-41, which originally was a woe (Mt. 23:25-26),¹⁰ into a response to the Pharisee's aston-

⁷ Walker, *Heilsgeschichte*, pp. 68-69. Wolfgang Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel. Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus Evangeliums*, p. 200, claimed that the reproach, "blind guides", referred to the teaching of the Pharisees, while "hypocrites" referred to their existence. But why does the content of v. 16 apply to their teaching any more than the other woes (cf. 23:24, 26)? This distinction does not seem to be valid.

⁸ Ulrich Wilckens, "ὕποκρινομαι...", p. 567, n. 45.

⁹ Cf. Lk. 12:1, 56; and 13:15 which include the charge of hypocrisy without any parallel so that it apparently was added by Luke himself. Wilckens, "ὕποκρινομαι...", p. 567, n. 45, argued that in the context there is no reason for the explanation in Lk. 12:1 that the leaven of the Pharisees was hypocrisy, and stated: "... one can explain it only on the assumption that Luke was familiar with the catchword from the Woes tradition and brought it in here". Wolfgang Beilner, *Christus und die Pharisäer: Exegetische Untersuchung über Grund und Verlauf der Auseinandersetzungen*, p. 227, also claimed that Luke left the reproach blank in the woes since he was aware of it in 12:1 and 13:15.

¹⁰ So J. M. Creed, *The Gospel According to Luke*, p. 165; Heinrichs, *Komposition*, p. 27, as cited by Schulz, *Q*, p. 95; Beilner, *Christus und die Pharisäer*, p. 219; Wilfred L. Knox, *The Sources of the Synoptic Gospels*, I:97-98; Schulz, *Q*, p. 95. But cf. Bultmann, *History*, pp. 131-132; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 51; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 31; Sand, *Das Gesetz*, p. 84, who claim that Luke preserves the original setting. This is the fourth dinner episode in Luke's gospel (cf. 5:29; 7:36; 10:38; 14:1) which seems to be an artificial construction.

ishment at Jesus' failure to wash his hands ritually. This astonishment in v. 38 sets up a confrontation which then makes reasonable and somewhat justifies the vehement eruption which ensues. However, vv. 39-41 have no direct application to the Pharisee's shocked silence. His surprise at Jesus' inattention to ritual purity was hardly provocation for the heated denunciation which follows. No question was actually posed, and Jesus' answer (presumably he read the Pharisee's mind)¹¹ is ostensibly directed to the issue of the purity of vessels—a matter which so meticulous a host would surely have attended to—and not to the issue of ritual washing which had caused his quizzical concern. In fact, vv. 39-41 do not even address the issue of cleansing vessels, but are metaphorically applied to condemn the inner existence of Pharisees.¹² Luke's introduction to the woes is far from smooth and manifests an attempt to ameliorate the social awkwardness inherent in a situation in which Jesus pronounces woes on a host who invited him to his table in good faith.

It would thus seem credible that Luke, in the interest of moderating the ungraciousness of Jesus, omitted the reproach "hypocrites" that was present in his source.¹³ It is only after Luke reported that the scribes and Pharisees began to press Jesus with a view to trapping him in his speech (11:52) that the charge of hypocrisy appears (12:1). The words ἐνεδρεύοντες and θηρεύσαι imply a treachery¹⁴ which makes the warning about the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees more congruent with the situation. Of course, this in no way confirms that ὑποκριταί was present in Luke's source and that he subsequently omitted it; but it does offer a plausible explanation. It is nevertheless significant that both the Lucan and Matthean woes are in some way linked to the charge of hypocrisy. In Matthew it is part and parcel of the woes themselves; in Luke it is the upshot of the scribes and Pharisees' reaction to the woes. This would suggest that Matthew's emphasis on the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees need not have been something conjured up out of the blue in the heat of battle with the Jamnian synagogue "across the street". It was a sentiment which

¹¹ Cf. Knox, *Sources*, I:97.

¹² Cf. below, pp. 144-145.

¹³ Cf. Adolf Schlatter, *Das Evangelium des Lukas*, p. 305, and Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 245.

¹⁴ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 361; H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, pp. 562, 792. These words are hunting metaphors.

can be discovered in the tradition prior to Matthew.¹⁵ Matthew simply repeated it more often. The repetition of the charge in the woes may thus be attributable to the source which Matthew utilized and not to the redactor. At least, caution should be used in making judgments about Matthew's redactional intention on the basis of the recurrence of "hypocrites" throughout the woes.

The Charge as Matthean

It may still be said that even though the charge of hypocrisy was perhaps traditional, Matthew distinctively reemphasized that charge throughout his gospel; and it may in that sense also be considered redactional. Verse 28 is surely a Matthean summary which marks the conclusion of the first six woes since the seventh woe in v. 29 moves on from the charge of hypocrisy to that of murder.¹⁶ It must be admitted that this accusation against the Jewish leaders had particular significance for Matthew. Perhaps Barth was right when he contended that it exaggerates the case to claim that "hypocrisy" is the summation of *all* the charges that Matthew imputes to the scribes and Pharisees,¹⁷ but there is no other qualification so completely worked out by Matthew.¹⁸ It is the overriding accusation in chap. 23.

¹⁵ Cf. Mk. 7:6; 12:15; Lk. 12:1, 56; 13:15. Rudolf Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen der Redaktion von Matthäus 23", *Orientierung an Jesus. Zur Theologie der Synoptiker. Für Josef Schmid*, p. 291, claimed that the reproach belonged to the pre-Matthean tradition and not the redactor. Robert Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition*, p. 180, conceded that the term had great significance (both polemical and theological) for Matthew but believed it probably went back to Jesus.

¹⁶ Cf. below, p. 166.

¹⁷ Gerhard Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law", *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, p. 61, n. 4, reacted particularly to Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", pp. 58-59, who claimed that the "theologian" Matthew had nothing to accuse the Pharisees, besides their persecution of Christians, except their religious hypocrisy. Barth thought this was an exaggeration which stemmed from attaching too much weight to chap. 23. There were other debates and other criticisms. He agreed with Haenchen, however, that the charge was taken over from the previous generation and applied in the embittered struggle when nothing good could be seen in the enemy any longer. From this, Barth concluded that the charge was simply a general accusation for the enemy which could not be pressed theologically. He cited Did. 8:1, where the Jews equal "the hypocrites", and Gen. R. 48:5, where the Christians are "the hypocrites" (תנוריה). One can also compare Herm. Sim. VIII. vi. 5, IX. xviii. 3, IX. xix. 2; I Tim. 4:2; Josephus, *Bell.* II:587, where those judged to be heretics are called "the hypocrites". Cf. also Wilckens, "ὑποκρίνομαι", p. 564, n. 26.

¹⁸ van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 9.

THE CHARGE OF HYPOCRISY AS A CHARACTERIZATION
OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

The question arises: In what sense did Matthew understand hypocrisy as a characterization of the scribes and Pharisees?¹⁹ What is the nature of their hypocrisy? What is it that they do that warrants the charge "hypocrite"? The prevalent modern understanding of this word makes the answer appear more obvious than it is. The transliteration, "hypocrisy", is widely understood in terms of pretending to be or representing oneself to be a better person than one really is. It connotes feigning, dissembling, and deceiving in modern usage. At some points this conception of the meaning of hypocrisy is applicable in the New Testament, but certainly not at every point. The history of the usage of ὑπόκρισις reveals that this meaning is a later development;²⁰ and its diverse implications in varying contexts

¹⁹ Werner Georg Kümmel, "Die Weherufe über die Schriftgelehrten und Pharisäer (Matthäus 23, 13-16)", *Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament*, p. 141, stated "...hier wird nun die Frage bedrangend, welchen Sinn die durch Matthäus eingefügte Charakterisierung der Schriftgelehrten und Pharisäer als Heuchler hat".

²⁰ The word ὑποκρίνομαι originally meant "to separate gradually". It then came to be used to mean "subject to inquiry", "interrogate", and was associated with answering or replying (similar to ἀποκρίνομαι). The word was also used in the sense of delivering a speech or declaiming. It was applicable to the stage actor because of its connotation of speaking in a dialogue or responding; or, since it could mean "to interpret" or "expound", it might have been applied to the actor who "interpreted" a part. It then became used metaphorically for anyone who played a part in life that did not correspond to reality. Ulrich Wilckens, "ὑποκρίνομαι...", p. 563, provided a good concordance for the classical usage of the word and concluded from his analysis:

In all classical usage ὑποκρίνομαι never became a term with a negative ethical ring and ὑποκριτής alone cannot denote the "hypocrite" but remains a *vox media*. The words always have additions which show whether the acting or pretending is in a given case to be viewed positively, negatively, or neutrally. Only in the Byzantine period does the word group acquire a direct negative sense under the influence of Christian usage.

In classical Greek, then, the word group was primarily used for one who interpreted or recited poetry or drama and only secondarily did it have the sense of one who was consciously playing a part or reciting. Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p. cxvi, contended that the Greek verb κρίνω and its derivatives are all primarily concerned with interpretation. However, it cannot be denied that it is always used in biblical literature *in sensu malo*.

In the LXX, ὑποκριτής was occasionally employed to render הָנֵף. It appears in Job 34:30 and 36:13 as a description of "the wicked man"; and it also occurs in the Hexapla in Job 15:34 (Aq., Th.), 20:5 (Aq.), 34:30 (Th.); 36:13 (Th.); Prov. 11:9 (Aq., Sm., Th.); Isa. 33:14 (Aq., Sm., Th.); and Hos 6:9 (Sm.). But *hanef* is more

necessitate some caution before imposing the idea of a disparity between appearance and being into any text in Matthew, particularly if it is possible that the charge ὑποκριταὶ goes back before Matthew to a Palestinian community or even to Jesus where a Hebraic coloring

often translated by ἀσέβης (Job 8:13, 15:34 and 27:8), ἀνόμος (Isa. 9:16, 10:6, and 32:6), παράνομος (Job 17:8, and 20:5), δόλος (Job 13:16), μυκτηρισμός (Ps. 35:16), and μολυσμός (Jer. 23:15). The verb form is rendered by ἀνομέω (Isa. 24:5), μαιίνω (Jer. 3:1, 2, 9; Dan. 11:32), μολύνω (Jer. 23:11), φονοκτονέω (Num. 35:33; Ps. 105 (106):38). The Hebrew word itself has a pejorative connotation of wickedness, pollution, alienation from God, or godlessness, which is unrelated to dissembling. The translation of the Hebrew by "hypocrite" in the AV is misleading. We can conclude from this that in the LXX and the later translations of Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus, ὑποκριτής, when translated for *hanef*, implies a general wickedness without any hint that internal corruption has been coated with a veneer of external piety.

The puzzle is how the basic idea of ἀσέβης, ἀνόμος, δόλος, and μολυσμός became associated with the Greek word for "actor". Wilckens asked: "Did Judaism regard the pagan actor as a supreme representative of wickedness?" (p. 566, n. 38). Perhaps this association is attributable to the fact that actors portrayed the gods on the stage. Nevertheless, the anecdote about the stage hand (or mime, ὀρχηστής) contained in the Palestinian Talmud (cf. Saul Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, pp. 31-33, for text and comments) indicates that people associated with the theater were normally considered to be the dregs of society. Yet the notion of acting a part with the intention to deceive is the most prominent feature in the usage of ὑποκριτής in later Jewish-Greek literature.

The verb is used in II Macc. 5:25 to describe the treacherous massacre of innocents by Antiochus' general, Apollonius, who "pretended" to be peacefully disposed while biding his time to carry out his orders. The verb is also utilized for relating the incident about the scribe, Eleazar, who was urged by friends to supply his own kosher meat and give the false impression that he had acquiesced to the demands that the Jews partake of the pagan sacrifices (II Macc. 6:21, 24, 25; IV Macc. 6:15, 17). He refused on the grounds that this deception would be a bad example that would lead many people astray and chose martyrdom instead. The injunction in Sir. 1:29 "be not a hypocrite in the mouths of men", is put between the warning not to approach God with a "double heart" (1:28) and a heart full of deceit (1:30). Deception is therefore a key element of the meaning of "hypocrite". However, Sir. 32:15 and 33:2 contextually point to an understanding of the verb as antipathetic to the Law. "Being hypocritical" is contrasted with one who seeks, is not offended by, nor hates the Law and one who forms true judgments and has a right understanding. The idea of deception is not primary; the hypocrite is one who stands over against the Law in some improper way and whose judgments and understanding are warped.

The use of the word group in Philo explicitly connotes dissimulation (*Abr.* 211; *Conf.* I:48; *Fuga* 33-34, 156; *Gaium* 22; *Heres.* 43; *Jos.* 67-69; *Leg. All.* II:75; *Quod Deus* 102-103; *Quod Omn.* 90; *Somn.* II:40; *Spec. Leg.* IV:183-185), and it is identified with a desire for office or reputation, pretension, feigning, flattery, imposture, seeming rather than being, fraud, guile, disguising malicious motives, and insincere worship of God. In several passages the stage metaphor is clear cut as the hypocrite is identified as one who "assumes a strange garb" or "performs to assembled spectators" (*Leg. All.* II:75, *Quod Deus* 102-103, and *Spec. Leg.* IV:185). However, in *Somn.* I:205, the word retains its classical meaning of declamation when Philo refers to rhetoric or delivery as something which a leader must learn.

might be determinative. There is no simple explanation which comprehends every instance of the use of the word hypocrisy in the New Testament or Post-Apostolic writings. However, most of the arguments about Matthew's understanding of hypocrisy have tended to polarize between the notion of conscious pretence and that of *objectiver Selbstwiderspruch*, while some commentators have allowed for both meanings, depending upon the context.²¹ These concepts emanate from a basically hellenistic understanding of ὑπόκρισις.

In Josephus, the noun and verb are used to describe ruses employed to deceive others, mostly, although not always, maliciously. Abraham's strategy to pass Sarah off as his sister when sojourning in foreign lands is described as "hypocrisy" (*Ant.* I:162, 207, 211), as is Joseph's pretended anger at his brother, Benjamin, when the planted goblet was discovered on his person (*Ant.* II:160). Other references to hypocrisy are applied to those who attempt to feign friendship or support for someone when they are actually plotting their destruction (cf. *Bell.* I:318, 471, 516, 518, 520, 569, 628; II:587, 617; IV:60, 209, 347; V:112; *Ant.* VII:165; XII:216; XIII:220; XVI:216; *Vit.* 36). In both *Bell.* I:471 and *Ant.* I:162, the imagery of "staging", assuming a role as an actor might, is part of the immediate context. Only in *Bell.* I:27 does ὑποκρίνομαι have a different semantic content, "to answer".

One can conclude from this that by the first century C.E. the word group of ὑποκρίνομαι was associated with conscious deceit and "acting a part" (even in the curious reference in T. Ash. 7:3 where God "plays a part", Θεὸς εἰς ἄνδρα ὑποκρινόμενος, which is probably a Christian addition). This is also the clear implication of the antonym ἀνυπόκριτος in the N.T., which has to do with "sincerity" (cf. Rom. 12:9, II Cor. 6:6, I Tim. 1:5, II Tim. 1:5, Jas. 3:17, I Pet. 1:22 and II Clem. 12:3). However, Wisd. 5:18 and 18:15 prove to be an exception when κρίσιν ἀνυπόκριτον refers to God's impartial justice (5:18) and τὴν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐπιτάγην refers to an authentic command.

The basic idea of interpretation, the association with "wickedness" in the Greek versions of the Old Testament, the antipathetic relationship to the Law and true understanding should not be ignored as possible ingredients in the range of the meaning of ὑποκριτής in Matthew 23.

Cf. further the discussions in Wilckens, "ὑποκρίνομαι...", pp. 559-566; Paul Joüon, "'ΥΠΟΚΡΙΤΗΣ dans L'Evangile et Hebreu *Hanef*", *RechSR*, XX:312-316, 1930; M. Gertner, "The Terms *Pharisaioi*, *Gazarenoi*, *Hypokritai*: Their Semantic Complex and Conceptual Correlation", *BSOAS*, XXVI:245-263; W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew*, pp. cxii, cxv-cxxiii; Beilner, *Christus und die Phariseer*, pp. 228-229; Wolfgang Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, pp. 198-199. See also the dictionaries: Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, pp. 1885-1886; Jacob Levy, *Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim*, II:83-84; and Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, I:484-485.

²¹ In addition to these two basic interpretations, Beilner, *Christus und die Phariseer*, pp. 228-235, offered the distinctive view that ὑπόκρισις in the New Testament was a failure in faith (das Versagen im Glauben) on the part of the Pharisees. Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, pp. cxiii ff., rejected the minatory meaning of "hypocrite" and its association with the idea of consciously playing a part which is at variance with one's convictions, and they related its meaning to "an overscrupulous, pettifogging concern with the minutiae of law". They translated ὑποκριταί as "Casuists", "Pettifoggers", "Shysters", and "Time-servers".

Hypocrisy as Conscious Pretence

Ernst Haenchen argued that the all-embracing accusation which Matthew leveled against the scribes and Pharisees was that of religious hypocrisy. By that he meant conscious pretence, a subjective dishonesty, which is summed up in v. 3, "They say, but do not do".²² The fundamental indictment is that the Pharisees are not the pious people they claim to be.²³ According to Haenchen, Matthew's conceptualization of hypocrisy is clearest in 15:7-9. The contrast between lips and hearts in the quotation from Isaiah 29:13, which follows the accusation "hypocrites" in 15:7, reflects the contrast between external and internal reality; and this contrast is the essence of hypocrisy. This same notion of conscious pretence which seeks to cloak the inner reality with a superficial homage through words is most apparent, according to Haenchen, in 23:27-28. The disparity between what is ἔσωθεν and what is ἔξωθεν is explicitly condemned in these verses: οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔξωθεν μὲν φαίνεσθε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις δίκαιοι, ἔσωθεν δὲ εἰστε μεστοὶ ὑποκρίσεως καὶ ἀνομίας. The phrase φαίνεσθαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις occurs in 6:5, 16, 18 also in the context of the charge of hypocrisy, and implies that they give only the appearance of being righteous.²⁴ Haenchen, along with others,²⁵

²² Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 46.

²³ Ibid., p. 59.

²⁴ Rudolf Bultmann and Dieter Lührmann, "φαίνω...", *TDNT*, IX:2; Bauer, *Lexicon*, p. 859; and Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, pp. 1912-1913.

²⁵ Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 140, claimed that the hypocrisy of chap. 23 does not refer to an objective self-contradiction but conscious pretence which he saw as the point of every instance of its usage in chap. 23. Each woe has to do with acts of outward piety. W. C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, p. 245, described the woes as seven examples of Pharisaic saying and not doing. Along these lines cf. also Barth, *Tradition*, pp. 61-62; Pierre Bonnard, *L'Évangile selon Saint Matthieu*, pp. 79, 338, 452; Leonhard Goppelt, *Jesus Paul and Judaism: An Introduction to New Testament Theology*, pp. 43f.; H. F. Weiss, *Der Pharisäismus im Lichte der Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments*, p. 110; Wilckens, "ὑποκρίνομαι...", pp. 567-568; Rolf Walker, *Heilsgeschichte*, p. 69. Adolf Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus*, p. 201, followed by Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 193, see "hypocrite" as meaning *Schauspieler*, one who plays a role seeking only the praise of men rather than God. Theodore Robinson, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 191, asserted that hypocrisy meant acting, "presenting a fiction to public gaze". Cf. also Donald Mattheson, "'Actors': Christ's Word of Scorn", *ET*, XLI:333-334, 1929-1930; Frank Stagg, "Matthew", *BBC*, VIII:113; Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 179. Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 200, cited Strecker with agreement that hypocrisy entailed conscious dissimulation but also believed it entailed an objective self-deception. Kümmel, "Die Weherufe", p. 141, recognized that Matthew wanted to reproach a conscious false conduct in chap. 23, but claimed that there was more to it than that; chap. 23 was also directed against the self-deception of the Pharisees.

concluded from this evidence that when Matthew speaks of the hypocrisy of Jesus' opponents, he means "actual" hypocrisy and nothing else. He also believed that Matthew attempted to convey, by means of the negative example of the scribes and Pharisees, the essence of true piety. True piety should concentrate on gaining the approval of God rather than the praise of men.²⁶

Supporting evidence from Matthew 23. The evidence of vv. 3-10 would lend support to the argument that chap. 23 is concerned with pious sham which may be labeled as hypocrisy, although the actual term does not appear in these verses. The frontispiece of the chapter expressly states the idea: "they say and do not do" (v. 3). In v. 4, the scribes and Pharisees are condemned for binding heavy burdens which they pile on the backs of men but they themselves do not wish to raise a finger to ease the load. This is often interpreted as an example of saying and not doing. The scribes and Pharisees legislate for others, but they do not apply their rulings to themselves.²⁷ The statement in v. 5, πάντα δὲ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν ποιοῦσιν πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, closely parallels the redactional introduction in 6:1,²⁸ προσέχετε τὴν δικαιοσύνην ὑμῶν μὴ ποιεῖν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι αὐτοῖς. In 6:2, 5, 16 the charge of hypocrisy is specific where it appears that Jesus is intent on exposing the ulterior motives which subtly take hold of religious piety. It cannot be doubted that hypocrisy constituted a pernicious discrepancy between outer appearance and inner reality; and although the behaviour described in 23:3-10 is not called hypocrisy, it corresponds to this definition. What seems to be condemned in 23:3-10 is an ostentatious piety which masked an inner corruption and disobedience.

The word "hypocrite" in Matthew may indeed imply a conscious dissimulation, but it certainly can only be considered as one aspect of its meaning.²⁹ In the woes where the charge "hypocrite" is explicit,

²⁶ Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 46.

²⁷ Cf. above, pp. 50-52. This interpretation is more appropriate for the parallel in Lk. where the word προσψαύω, to touch (tenderly), appears.

²⁸ Cf. Bultmann, *History*, p. 150; Knox, *Sources*, II:19, 25; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 152; Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 67; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, p. 140; Sand, *Das Gesetz*, pp. 203-204; Hubert Frankemölle, *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi. Studien zur Form und Traditionsgeschichte des "Evangeliums" nach Matthäus*, p. 280.

²⁹ This idea is most obvious in Mt. 22:18. The Pharisees and Herodians conspire

there is no conspicuous clash between what the scribes and Pharisees say and what they do. They are railed at for their *doing*; the clash inheres in the fact that what they *do* is opposed to God's will.

Countervailing evidence from Matthew 23. The idea that the hypocrite is one who has falsely represented himself to be a better person than he actually is has no applicability to vv. 13, 15 and 23 where the reproach "hypocrite" appears; and, as v. 25 is interpreted below, it has no applicability there either. It is only in vv. 27-28 that the contrast between appearance and reality seems explicit. The first charge, which accuses the scribes and Pharisees of shutting the kingdom of heaven to men, has nothing to do with religious sham; rather, it assails a misdirected religious zeal.³⁰ The same is true of the second woe which condemns their proselytism. There is not the slightest intimation of insincerity in the energetic pursuit of one proselyte. What is castigated is the final result of their missionary endeavor. The focus of attention in vv. 16-22, where "hypocrite" does not occur,³¹ is the casuistry which attempts to evade the obligation of oaths. This may involve deception if one swears an oath that appears to be binding while secretly knowing that there are loopholes which will enable escape from any accountability.³² However, the accusation

to entangle Jesus in his words (Mt. 22:15 = Mk. 12:13), which obviously involves insincerity on their part. However, this is much more explicit in the Lucan account: καὶ παρατηρήσαντες ἀπέστειλεν ἐγκαθέτους ὑποκρινομένους ἑαυτοὺς δικαίους εἶναι ἵνα ἐπιλάβωνται αὐτοῦ λόγου, ὥστε παραδοῦναι αὐτὸν τῇ ἀρχῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος (20:20). In comparison, Matthew's account does not stress their insincerity so much as their malice. Mark has ὁ δὲ εἰδὼς αὐτῶν τὴν ὑπόκρισιν (12:15); while Matthew has γνοὺς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πονηρίαν αὐτῶν (cf. Lk. 20:23, πανουργία), and then he added the vocative ὑποκριταί. Hypocrisy is, therefore, similar to πονηρία in Matthew's mind. On πονηρία, cf. van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp. 27-45.

This aspect of hypocrisy seems apparent also in 6:2, 5, 16, where hypocrites are condemned for trumpeting their piety and scrupulousness in public in order to be glorified by men. But there is no indication that they were acting a part which contradicted their inner convictions; they falsely believed that God would be as tickled with their manifestations of piety as men were. They had set themselves up as self-conscious examples. The disciples are warned not to be "sincere", but to give alms, pray and fast ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ (6:3, 6, 18).

In 7:4-5, the "hypocrite" is not guilty of conscious religious sham. He sincerely considers himself acceptable and worthy of being a judge. He is accused of an uncritical moral complacency while being hypercritical of others.

³⁰ Cf. Rom. 10:2-3; Phil. 3:6.

³¹ Cf. Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 200, and n. 7, above.

³² Cf. CD 1:18f.

ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοί, apparently a proverbial expression for false Jewish teachers,³³ stresses the ingredient of false teaching in the casuistry; and the adjective "blind" (vv. 15, 17, and 19) implies that the misleading was unintentional. The woe in v. 23 also does not imply an insincerity in the fastidious tithing of garden herbs. This can only be read into the text. What is at issue is a remarkable failure to distinguish between the weighty and less weighty matters of the law. Pious sham is not insinuated; but as the hyperbole in v. 24 pithily expresses, they have quite sincerely strained their wine to avoid gnat-uncleanness while gulping down a camel. The epithet "blind guides" again implies a teaching failure which was unintentional. It is not that they taught and did not do; they went above and beyond normal requirements but were insufficient in the major requirements of the Law. Likewise, the accusation in v. 29 also does not entail feigning the "good" Israelite life; but, actually it exposes an error in their self-knowledge. The builders of the memorials for the righteous who pay homage to dead prophets are honestly convinced that they are better than their fathers. They do not necessarily pretend to be better; they wrongly believe they are better, just as the Pharisee considered himself better than the publican in Luke 18:9-14.³⁴

The intensive investigation of the woes will follow in the next chapter; but from a cursory examination, it is clear that the modern understanding of hypocrisy will not always fit. The yoking of ὑποκρίσις with ἀνομία in v. 28, which has a decidedly Matthean stamp,³⁵ compels a reconsideration of hypocrisy as simply meaning conscious pretence. For Matthew, one defining factor of ὑποκρίσις apparently is its integral association with ἀνομία.³⁶

³³ Cf. Rom. 2:19; Wilhelm Michaelis, "ὁδός...", *TDNT*, V:99-100; Wolfgang Schrage, "τυφλός...", *TDNT*, VIII:292-293; Otto Michel, *Der Brief an der Römer*, p. 87f.; and Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 49. Cf. also Barth, *Tradition*, p. 88.

³⁴ van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 21.

³⁵ Cf. below, p. 158, n. 139.

³⁶ Wilckens, "ὑποκρίνομαι...", p. 568, n. 46, stated: "... it should not be overlooked that in Mt. ὑπόκρισις is not characterized gen. by the disparity of appearance and being, the outer and the inner, but by the fact that the ref. is to an essential feature of ἀνομία". Cf. also van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 231; Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, pp. cxii-cxiii; and S. Legasse, "L'antijudaïsme dans l'Évangile selon Matthieu", *L'Évangile selon Matthieu: Redaction et théologie*, p. 423.

Other Possible Meanings of Hypocrisy

Haenchen was correct that hypocrisy epitomized all of the charges in Matthew 23,³⁷ but "hypocrisy" is capable of much greater extension of meaning than he allowed. This is true of the English usage of the word as well. In one instance, hypocrisy can be malicious (eg.: Lk. 20:19-26); and the hypocrite is more aware of the hypocrisy than anyone else. In another instance, the hypocrite may be quite oblivious of his own sins (eg.: Mt. 7:3-5); while almost everyone else is more cognizant of the hypocrisy than the hypocrite. It is the latter which seems to be most prominent in Matthew's gospel. That is, what is called hypocrisy does not seem to be a calculated mimicry of religious sincerity in order to shield from view an inner godlessness. And, many commentators have understood the charge of hypocrisy in Matthew to imply an *objectiver Existenz* or *Selbstwiderspruch* viewed from the perspective of God.³⁸

Trilling allowed for both interpretations of hypocrisy in chap. 23, conscious pretence and self-deception, but argued further that the charge "hypocrite" is not a characterization of the scribes and Pharisees but a thematic pivot on which the entire chapter turns.³⁹ "Hypocrite" is not just a reproach like γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν; it is an evaluation of a religious condition.⁴⁰ It condemns more than the false piety of outward show; it condemns "the inveterate evil" of the very existence of the Pharisees. Hypocrisy, according to Trilling, has theological ramifications and may be generally understood as an all-embracing

³⁷ Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 46.

³⁸ So Erich Klostermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, p. 53; Julius Schniewind, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 77; Josef Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, pp. 214-215; Floyd V. Filson, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, pp. 104, 177 and 244; J.C. Fenton, *The Gospel of Saint Matthew*, wrote: "The word *hypocrites* may mean, not so much consciously playing a part, but that, while in the sight of men they may and do seem to be righteous, in the sight of God they are not. That is, the distinction may not be so much between what they want other people to think about them and what in fact they are; but between what they think of themselves and what God thinks of them". Cf. also, Paul Gaechter, *Das Matthäus Evangelium*, p. 204; Kümmel, "Weherufe", p. 141; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 143. Paul S. Minear, "False Prophecy and Hypocrisy in the Gospel of Matthew", *Neues Testament und Kirche. Für Rudolf Schnackenburg*, p. 88, observed that the clause in the woes functioned to define what kind of hypocrisy was involved. He maintained that the definition contained a double reference to a good feature and to a bad feature. The good feature cloaked the bad and disclosed the duplicitous nature of hypocrisy which deceives both others and the hypocrite.

³⁹ Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 198.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

expression which describes the religiosity that fails to do God's will and that stands in direct opposition to δικαιοσύνη.⁴¹

The Ambiguity of the Greek Word Ὑπόκρισις

Trilling's arguments seem to make the meaning of "hypocrisy" in Matthew quite similar to its general meaning of "godlessness" found in the LXX. But the question remains unanswered, what is it about the inveterate evil of the Pharisees' existence that would cause it to be characterized as hypocrisy? It has been shown that it does not necessarily entail the guile of the Pharisees, nor the fact that they say and do not do. Should the contrast between *Sein und Schein*, which is really only apparent in 23:27-28,⁴² be normative for the understanding of the charge hypocrisy? Or, has the usage of the word ὑποκριταί in chap. 23 been influenced by its usage in the LXX, or perhaps some other background as a translation of another Hebrew concept?⁴³ It seems that *Sein und Schein* is not the determinative factor for understanding the charge "hypocrites" in the woes.⁴⁴

The relationship of the reproach "hypocrite" to the Qumran reproach

⁴¹ Ibid.; cf. van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 25; Kümmel, "Weherufe", p. 141. Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 181, summed up:

For Matthew, then, the term is a comprehensive expression for Pharisaic piety and serves as the theological antithesis to the similarly comprehensive δικαιοσύνη which he uses to denote that which Jesus demands of his followers and of τέλειος which is descriptive of the character of those obedient to them.

⁴² Cf. the interpretation of 23:27-28 below, pp. 150-159.

⁴³ So Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, p. cxii; and Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p. 285.

⁴⁴ Today, "Pharisee" has become synonymous with "hypocrite". This a priori equation is so entrenched that the prevalent notion that Jesus opposed the Pharisees because they were dissemblers is rarely questioned. Certainly, the scribes and Pharisees did not have a corner on the market of hypocrisy, and they were not all hypocrites. Many have come to their defence. Israel Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, II:30, wrote of chap. 23: "The attack is too indiscriminate to be effective". G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, II:193, stated:

But that the Pharisees as a whole were conscious and calculating hypocrites whose ostentatious piety was a cloak for deliberate and secret villainy is unimaginable in view of the subsequent history of Judaism. For it was men of the Pharisaean party who tided Judaism over the two great crises of the destruction of Jerusalem and the war under Hadrian.

In the same vein, Louis Finkelstein, *The Pharisees*, I:97-98, wrote:

If by hypocrisy was meant their self-control, and by punctiliousness their insistence on the mastery and observance of detail in the Law, they were indeed guilty of both. They were, however, quite innocent of the charges of insincerity, fanaticism, and false motives which were ascribed to them, as to the Puritans of a later age.

דורש חלקות. A charge against the opponents of the Qumran sect is frequently found in their literature and may shed some additional light on the charge of hypocrisy in Matthew 23. Their antagonists

Compare further the comments of C. G. Montefiore, *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings*, p. 322; Herbert Loewe, *Judaism and Christianity*, I:158; Weiss, *Der Pharisaismus*, pp. 110-111; David Farbstein, "Waren die Pharisäer und die Schriftgelehrten Heuchler?" *Judaica*, VIII:193-207, 1952; and Hugo Odeberg, *Pharisaism and Christianity*, p. 63.

The New Testament itself is a reluctant witness to the fact that not all Pharisees were hypocrites whose outside was not as their inside. The statement in Matthew 5:20, "For I say unto you, except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven", would be odd unless the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was considered to be real, not sham, so that the rigorous nature of Christian discipleship might be emphasized. It would have been superfluous to say your righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees if it were widely assumed that their righteousness was empty talk. The disciple must have a righteousness which exceeds a righteousness that must have been considered real for the statement to have had any impact. The nature of this surpassing righteousness is defined in the rest of the Sermon, but the point is that there is an implicit recognition of the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees even in the gospel of Matthew.

The statement in Luke 5:33 (cf. Mk. 2:19; Mt. 9:14) equates the fasting and praying of the Pharisees with that of the disciples of John with no indication that this is to be understood as hypocrisy, as it is in Matthew 6:5 and 16. Twice Luke recorded that Jesus dined with a Pharisee (7:36; 11:37); and in 13:31, Pharisees came and warned Jesus of the imminent danger from Herod, urging his flight. According to John's gospel, Nicodemus was a Pharisee (3:1) who earnestly sought the truth, acted out of concern for justice (7:50-51), and moved with some courage in claiming the body of Jesus for burial (19:39). Gamaliel was extremely fastidious about tithing according to M. Ab. 1:16, but he did not neglect the weightier matters of justice and mercy as is recorded in Acts 5:34-40.

Paul is portrayed in Acts as recalling his background as a Pharisee with some sense of pride: "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees" (23:6). When defending himself before Agrippa, Paul again affirmed his life as a Pharisee:

My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and at Jerusalem is known by all the Jews. They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion, I have lived as a Pharisee (Acts 26:4-5).

There is no stigma attached to being a Pharisee. In Acts, Pharisees are among the early converts and are noted only for their legalism, not their hypocrisy (Acts 15:5). In Philippians 3:5-6, Paul himself asserts that his past as a Pharisee was a point of pride, however misdirected that pride might have been. Therefore, the New Testament bears witness, if only reticently, that Pharisaism should not be perfunctorily equated with a sham piety that was concerned only with externals; and statements such as Vincent Taylor's in *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 495, that hypocrisy is "... a standing peril of religious leaders; more especially in a religion based on legalism", are ill-advised. See the recent study by E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, on the positive aspects of Judaism and their misinterpretation by Christian scholars.

The Tannaim and Amoraim attacked dissembling and flattery as one of the basest of sins. Finkelstein claimed that Jesus' excoriations pale when placed beside some of

are accused of "seeking after smooth things" (דורשי חלקות). Translators have rendered this phrase in a variety of ways as "seekers, pursuers, or practicers of smooth or pleasant things, delusions, lies, or flattery",

the bitter denunciations of the Pharisees themselves, much of which seemed to derive from an internecine conflict (*The Pharisees*, 1:98). To be sure, passages may be extracted from a wide range of rabbinic literature which can contradict nearly every charge found in Matthew 23.

For example, Mt. 23:3 has its parallel in M. Ab. 1:17 where Simeon, the son of Rabban Gamaliel, said: "All my days have I grown up among the Sages and I have found naught better for a man than silence; and not the expounding of the Law is the chief thing but the doing; and he that multiplies words occasions sins".

The statement in 23:5a is contradicted by B. Sot. 22b: "King Jannai said to his wife, 'Fear not the Pharisees (*Perushim*) and the non-Pharisees, but the hypocrites (*Zbw'in*, chameleons) who ape the Pharisees; because their deeds are the deeds of Zimri, but they expect a reward like Phineas".

According to Pes. R. 22:5, R. Bebai taught caution in wearing the *tefillin* while committing transgressions, because they were proof that the wearer took upon himself the name of God and was filled with fear of Him. An anecdote follows condemning hypocrites who like to mask themselves with *tefillin* by wearing them all day, which required that a person be clean from sin.

It was related of R. Johanan ben Zakkai, in B. Ber. 17a, that no man greeted him first, even a heathen, in the street, and that a favorite saying at Jabneh was: "I am God's creature and my fellow (*'am ha'arets*) is God's creature".

There was also concern over the contradiction between a man's "inside" and his "outside". Gamaliel II issued a proclamation: "No disciple whose character does not correspond to his exterior may enter the *Beth ha Midrash*" (B. Ber. 28a; cf. B. Yom. 72b, "Any scholar whose inside is not like his outside, is no scholar"). It was also generally believed that "hypocrites" would inherit Gehinnom (B. Pes. 113b, B. M. 49a, Sanh. 103a).

Relating to vv. 25ff., a statement is found in B. Pes. 40b: "In your life, it is not the corpse that defiles and not the water that cleanses; it is an ordinance of the King of all kings. God has said: ... No man has the right to transgress my statutes...".

Finally, R. Simeon b. Gamaliel taught: "Tombstones are not erected for the righteous, as their words are their memorials" (Gen. R. 82:10). Compare also the examples provided by E. E. Urbach, *The Sages*, pp. 357-358. Most pertinent is the interpretation credited to R. Benjamin in Eccl. R. 4:1:

But I returned and considered all the oppressions done under the sun; and behold the fears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter—alluding to the hypocrites of the Torah: all the people think he is a Bible scholar, but he is not; (that he is) a Mishna authority; but he is not; he is wrapped in his cloak and wears phylacteries on his head, 'and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter'. Said the Holy One, blessed be He: I must bring them to account, as it is said (Jer. 48:10) 'Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully (translation from Urbach, p. 357).

But all of this is beside the point. Certainly, all religions are susceptible to an unscrupulous few who attempt to fool others with the trappings of religious devotion; and the Pharisaic movement, which at the time of Christ must be considered to have been variegated, had their fair share—but so did Christianity (cf. Mt. 7:15-23; Acts 20:29-30; 1 Jn. 4:1; Ananias and Sapphira; Simon Magus, etc.). If the basic issue

or simply by the epithet "hypocrites".⁴⁵ What is interesting for our purposes is that this term of rebuke seems to possess somewhat the same ambiguity in meaning as has been traced for the varied history of the Greek word "hypocrite".⁴⁶ The charge in the Qumran scrolls may express both ethical corruption and doctrinal deviation on the part of those who are accused, but a careful analysis of the context where the reproach occurs⁴⁷ indicates that it is always employed in the context of disputes relating to interpretation of the Law and doctrine.

In the Damascus Document the phrase is applied to those who have been led astray (1:14) by "the man of mockery", and who, in addition to "seeking smooth things", also chose "illusion", "spied out breaches", and "transgressed the covenant" (1:20-21). They also "threatened and persecuted the just with the sword" (10:20-21); and, as a consequence, they will incur the curses of the covenant (1:17, 2:1). In the Hymns, the reproach recurs three times. The wicked persecution of the psalmist forms the immediate context (2:6-13) of the charge in 2:15; but in 2:13-14 the word, *לִיץ*, appears and indicates that the point of contention centered on interpretation. The psalmist, as

raised by Mt. 23 is that the scribes and Pharisees were dissemblers, who said and did not do, it must be considered dubious. The New Testament attests that this was not universally true prior to A.D. 70; the later history of Judaism attests that this was not true of Jamnian Judaism either. Judaism survived and rallied around the spiritual forces of the Pharisees who retreated to Jamnia, for as Meyer averred with Moore: "...it was a minority of such religious force that in the period which followed [700 years] it put its stamp on world-wide Judaism" (*"φαιρισσαίος"*, p. 35).

If the charge of hypocrisy in Mt. 23 reflects simply a contrast between *Sein und Schein* then it is a polemical caricature of opponents which grossly distorts the picture. However, it may reflect a legitimate criticism that involves something more than or something quite different from the accusation of cloaking evil with a righteous facade. This possibility will be investigated and seems warranted by the variety of meanings which the Greek word hypocrite can imply.

⁴⁵ Gertner, "*HYPOKRITAI*", p. 250, n. 3. J. Sonne, "An Hymn Against Heretics", *HUCA*, XXIII:300, 1950-1951, claimed that duplicity was the most prominent trait, and that *ḥalaqoth* had the same connotation as "hypocrites" in the Christian writings of the second century. This conclusion needs to be reexamined.

⁴⁶ Cf. Isa. 30:10; Dan. 11:32; and Ps. 12:3 for such an ambiguity in the Old Testament. Gertner, "*HYPOKRITAI*", pp. 245-253, argued that *ḥalaq* means "to divide" and "to be smooth" or "false"; but applied to the mind it could express both heresy and hypocrisy. The word *הנופה* in Rabbinic literature also was used synonymously for hypocrisy and heresy as, for example, in Gen. R. 48:5 and Eccl. R. 5:5 (*תורה הניפי*).

⁴⁷ CD 1:18; 1 QH 2:15, 2:32, 4:10; 4Qp Isa. 10; and 4Qp Nah. 2:2, 7; 3:2, 4; 4:3, 6-7.

the interpreter of knowledge (ומליץ דעה, 2:13), opposed the interpreters of straying (למליצי תעות, 2:14). They sought “smooth things” (2:15). They are men of deceit (אנשי רמיה, 2:16) who condemned the psalmist, through whom God established the teaching, understanding, and knowledge, which they, in contrast, “bartered” for “uncircumcision of the lips” (2:18). Because they strayed from the truth, they will be lost. In Hymn D, the charge appears again with the accused identified as “interpreters of falsehood” (מליצי כזב) and seekers of deceit (דורשי רמיה, 2:31). Once again, they treat the psalmist contemptuously and plan to shed his blood (2:32). In Hymn H, the phrase once more is clearly connected with deceit and false interpretation. The opponents of the psalmist have led the people astray (4:6). They are “interpreters of deceit” who cause the people to stray and be destroyed because of a lack of understanding (4:7). They are accused of “flattering with words” (the verb form appears, החליקו), which, because of the context, may not be the best translation (cf. 4:10). In 4:9-10, they are called “interpreters of falsehood”, and “seers of deceit” who “bartered God’s law” (להמיר תורתכה) for “flattering words” (בחלקות), which certainly implies false interpretations (cf. 1QH 2:18). They are called עלמם (hypocrites) in 4:13-14,⁴⁸ who seek God with a double heart, and who have a root in their thoughts which bears fruits that are poisoned and bitter (a statement that has a striking affinity with Mt. 12:33-35). In 4:16, it is claimed that they seek God according to the preaching of “the prophets of falsehood” (נביאי כזב) and are led astray by error. Once again, persecution is a factor (4:9); and the psalmist is assured that the final judgment of God will cut off all these men of deceit (4:19-21). Clearly, the bitter antagonism between the psalmist and these opponents has been created by doctrinal disputes and diverging interpretations of the Law which issued in persecution.

The charge *doreshe ḥalakoth* is also found in the biblical commentaries. In the peshar on Isaiah, Isaiah 30:15-18 is applied to “the congregation of those who seek smooth things” (4QpIsa. 10). However, the most significant occurrences of the charge for speculation as to who these opponents might be are found in the peshar on Nahum. The phrase is used in 2:2 to refer to those who counseled [Deme]trius of Yāwān to enter Jerusalem. This may refer to Demetrius I

⁴⁸ Cf. 1QH 3:28, 4:13, 7:34; CD 8:6, 19:18.

(161 B.C.), who sent his general, Nicanor, to destroy Judea (cf. I Macc. 7:26-50); or it may refer to Demetrius III (88 B.C.), who entered Palestine at the request of the Pharisees during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (cf. Joseph *Ant.* XIII:379-383, Bell. 1:93-95). The latter seems the best alternative, for 2:7 relates that "the young lion" took vengeance on "those who seek smooth things" by "hanging them alive on wood". This seems to be a clear reference to Alexander Jannaeus' defeat of Demetrius and the subsequent crucifixion of 800 Pharisees, recorded by Josephus (cf. B. *Kidd.* 66b). This pesher would, therefore, identify "the seekers of smooth things" as the Pharisees.⁴⁹

The phrase occurs four other times in the Nahum commentary: 3:2, 4; and 4:3, 6-7. Familiar motifs recur. They "conduct themselves in lies and falsehood". Their "seeking" is connected to guilty counsel which will cause them to stumble; and, in 3:8, it is specifically related to false teaching, a lying tongue, and deceit. In consequence, they will lead Ephraim and resident aliens astray because of what they say (3:8-10). In 3:3 and 6-7, the charge is once again related to misleading and false counsel which will "ruin Judah's glory".

Some conclusions may now be drawn about the nature of the charge "to seek after smooth things" from the analysis of the contexts where it appears. It does not simply entail "smooth things" in the sense of flattery, deceit, or pleasure; it is to be connected with false counsel and interpretation which misunderstands God's Law and misleads the people of God. The Qumran authors must have had in view exegetical disputes when they used this reproach, which most translations have failed to capture. This has been correctly perceived by Meyer, who wrote concerning this phrase that the reference "is not so much to men 'who seek smooth things' as to those who 'give false interpretations of Scripture'".⁵⁰ It is this fundamental dispute which must have precipitated the persecution alluded to in many contexts and the recriminatory attack on the ethical character

⁴⁹ So J. M. Allegro, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 100; and A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings From Qumran*, pp. 268-270. Against this view cf. H. H. Rowley, "4Qp Nahum and the Teacher of Righteousness", *JBL*, LXXV: 188-192, 1956; and Sidney B. Hoening, "DORSHE' HALAKOT in the Pesher Nahum Scrolls", *JBL*, LXXXIII:133-138, 1964.

⁵⁰ Meyer, "Φαρισαῖος", p. 30. Cf. also Rudolf Meyer, *Tradition und Neuschöpfung im antiken Judentum. Dargestellt an der Geschichte des Pharisäismus*, pp. 61-62.

of these opponents: since they are adversaries who fail to recognize (our) truth, they must be liars who are vicious and corrupt.

It is significant that this quarrel appears to be with the Pharisees. Besides the historical allusion in the Nahum pesher, there are other clues which suggest that the Pharisees are the ones accused of exchanging Torah for *ḥalaqoth* (1QH 4:10). Although this writer disagrees with Sidney Hoenig's attempt to date the Qumran materials late, he has made some significant observations on this matter. He maintained that the Qumran writers drew upon specific biblical passages but shrewdly altered the phraseology to fit their own sectarian perspective.⁵¹ He believed that the term *ḥalaqoth* was obtained from its usage in Isaiah 30:10, Daniel 11:32, and Psalms 12:3 and 73:18. The expressions found in these passages, "smooth lips" (Ps. 12:2-3) and "speak to us smooth things" (Isa. 30:10), were changed to the reproach found in the Qumran writings. Hoenig believed that the word דרש (seek, inquire) was intentionally used instead of דבר (speak) or שפת (lips) because it has the rabbinic connotation of "interpreting a text".⁵² The opposite of דרש חלקות in Qumran is דרש התרה (cf. CD 6:6-7, 7:14). There is in the reproach a derisive play on words (which Hoenig attributes to Karaites in their opposition to the Rabbanites) between חלקות and הלכות.⁵³ Assuming, as most do, that the scrolls date from a period contemporaneous with the Pharisaic movement, the phrase, to "seek after smooth things", or, better, to "give false interpretations", would have been a pointed disparagement of the oral tradition of the Pharisees. This conclusion is further supported by the phrase in the pesher to Nahum בתלמוד שקרים (2:8, "those who by their false talmud"). Walcholder has interpreted this to mean false oral teaching or interpretation and has concluded that this is also an attack on the Pharisaic claims to be authoritative interpreters of the Law with their oral tradition.⁵⁴

May some connection be drawn between the charge found in Qumran, *doreshe ḥalaqoth*, and the charge against the scribes and

⁵¹ Hoenig, "DORSHE ḤALAKOT", p. 119.

⁵² Ibid., p. 126. See also, Otto Betz, *Offenbarung und Schriftforschung in der Qumransekte*, pp. 19-24; and Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, pp. 234-236.

⁵³ Hoenig, "DORSHE ḤALAKOT", p. 127. Hoenig cites Johanan Maier, "Weitere Stücke zum Nahum Kommentar aus der Höhle 4 von Qumran", *Judaica*, XVIII:230, n. 88, 1962.

⁵⁴ Z. Wacholder, "A Qumran Attack on the Oral Exegesis? The Phrase 'šr btlmwd šqrm in 4Q Pesher Nahum", *RevQ*, V:578, 1966. Cf. the remarks of Hoenig, "DORSHE ḤALAKOT", pp. 129-132.

Pharisees found in Matthew 23, "hypocrites", without being guilty of "parallelomania"? A direct relation between the Greek word ὑποκρισις and the Hebrew חִלְקוֹת was carefully argued by M. Gertner.⁵⁵ He proposed that the Greek words γαζαρηνοί, Φαρισαῖοι, and ὑποκριταί were all semantically related in their Hebrew equivalents to the principal notion of interpretation.⁵⁶ His intricate arguments need not be repeated, but this article does show that a connection between the reproach in Matthew 23 and Qumran is not entirely far-fetched. Both terms may connote dissimulation or deceit and false interpretation. And it may well be that Jesus' characterization of the failure of his opponents, the Pharisees, was very similar in nature to the sectarians' characterization of the failure of their opponents, who seem also to be the Pharisees. In both cases, the opposition to the Pharisees was not precipitated by moral outrage over their false character but by serious disputes involving the interpretation of Scripture. This has been demonstrated to be the case for the use of *ḥalaqoth* in the Qumran literature. It needs also to be recognized that Jesus did not condemn the counterfeit existence of the Pharisees simply because of an innate hatred of hypocrisy. Banks concluded from his study of Jesus and the Law: "Both in his actions and teaching he takes up a position over against the traditions of the Pharisees".⁵⁷ It was not anti-Phariseism as such; the Pharisees are condemned in the Synoptics only as their teaching stands in opposition to the will of God and Jesus' mission.⁵⁸

The meaning of the charge, "hypocrite", when registered against the opponents of Jesus, must be expanded to include the implication of a false interpretation of the Law. As a word which could and did signify "interpretation", "insincerity", or simply "godlessness", it could be very serviceable as a reproach. In later Greek the concept of ethical duplicity became the most prominent connotation. Certainly this trait is implied in the New Testament and Matthew 23, but it should not be considered so overriding in importance that other aspects of the meaning are overlooked. The same situation existed in the case of the charge in Qumran, "to seek after smooth things"; the implication of duplicity has been allowed to overshadow the

⁵⁵ Gertner, "HYPOKRITAI", pp. 245-253.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 245.

⁵⁷ Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 238.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 239.

subtle play on false interpretation. Both words, *halaqoth* and hypocrite, were admirably suited to convey two ideas: deception and interpretation. This reflects a common pattern that when disagreement occurs on points of interpretation or doctrine, aspersions are cast upon the character of the adversary as well as upon his interpretation. It is important, therefore, to recognize that what appears to be the central charge in Matthew 23 may not only pillory the inner character of the scribes and Pharisees but also denigrate them as interpreters of the law. The recognition of this explains why this very issue was raised so disconcertingly in the frontispiece of the discourse and why Matthew immediately discredited the authority attributed to the scribes and Pharisees in those opening verses. It is crystal clear that for Matthew Jesus is the final authority in matters of interpretation (3:8-10).⁵⁹ This broadening of the meaning of hypocrite also helps explain the relation of the charge to the actual content of the woes. The attack on the credibility of Jesus' opponents is, therefore, characterized as an attack on their "hypocrisy". It seems that whatever reproach Jesus himself may have used it probably had a double meaning, as the reproach in the Qumran literature did, which condemned both their character and interpretation. It is also apparent that Matthew understood the reproach, "hypocrite", in this manner.

The relationship of the charge to teaching. It is important to note that a certain ambiguity is to be found in the use of ὑποκρίσις in early Christian literature. It does not always explicitly convey the idea of dissimulation but often is used in the context of departure from orthodoxy, particularly as it relates to teaching. Paul's account of his public censure of Peter at Antioch in Galatians 2:13 did not simply condemn insincerity—which from Peter's perspective must have innocently been considered to be only pastoral discretion. Paul's accusation was more far-reaching. True, Peter, Barnabas and others yielded to the expectations of the men from James and "pretended"

⁵⁹ Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, pp. 332-333, noted that the teaching of Jesus had both a "distinctive position" and a "peculiar dignity" among early Christians because his teaching is "isolated from the sayings of other authorities". In a recent article, entitled "The Hermeneutic Program in Matthew 22:37-40", for the W. D. Davies Festschrift, *Jews, Greeks and Christians: Religious Cultures in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Robert Hamerton-Kelly and Robin Scroggs, p. 134, Gerhardsson argued that Mt. 22:37-40 was a carefully formulated hermeneutic program in the Matthean Church which indicated how to deal with the scriptures and all their parts.

to remain aloof from the Gentiles, when previously they had eaten shoulder to shoulder. But Paul accused them of not walking straight *toward* the truth of the Gospel (οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) rather than not being “straightforward” about the Gospel as it is usually translated.⁶⁰ In others words, from Paul’s point of view their actions entailed a retreat from the Gospel; and, moreover, those actions were identified with the works of the Law (vv. 16-21). The seriousness of the hypocrisy charged by Paul centers in the fact that responsible leaders misled others about the nature of God’s grace by appending the works of the Law. Cephas, in effect, was compelling Gentiles to become Jews (Ἰουδαῖζειν τὰ ἔθνη); and, therefore, the charge of hypocrisy can be associated here with false teaching as well as insincerity or, in this case, expediency.

Hypocrisy is closely associated with false teaching in I Timothy 4:1-2:

τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ῥητῶς λέγει ὅτι ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς ἀποστήσονται τινες τῆς πίστεως, προσέχοντες πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων, ²ἐν ὑποκρίσει ψευδολόγων ...

These teachers are heretics who are opposed throughout the Pastorals⁶¹ and who are legalistic in their teaching—forbidding marriages and enjoining abstinence from food (v. 3). Hypocrisy is also applied to the teacher and his teaching in the Shepherd. The “hypocrites” were the ones who introduced strange doctrines and corrupted the servants of God.⁶² This is precisely the connotation of ὑπόκρισις in Luke 12:1. Jesus warns the disciples to beware of the leaven which is the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. In Matthew 16:5-12, this leaven is explicitly, if tortuously, identified as their teaching, which is certainly what Luke must have had in mind in 12:1 as well. Therefore, the reproach may

⁶⁰ Cf. G. D. Kilpatrick, “Gal. 2:14 ὀρθοποδοῦσιν”, *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann*, p. 274; Wilckens, “ὑποκρίνομαι...”, p. 568; Franz Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief*, pp. 142-143.

⁶¹ Wilckens, “ὑποκρίνομαι...”, p. 569; cf. I Tim. 1:3-11; 6:3-5; II Tim. 2:14, 23; 3:1-9, 13; 4:3-4; and Tit. 1:10-16; 3:9-11.

⁶² Herm. *Sim.* VIII. vi. 5: ἦσαν γὰρ ὑποκριταὶ καὶ διδασκαὶς ξένας εἰσφέροντες καὶ ἐκστρέφοντες τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ, μάλιστα δὲ τοὺς ἡμαρτηκότας μὴ ἀφιέντες μετανοεῖν αὐτοὺς, ἀλλὰ ταῖς διδασκαίς ταῖς μωραῖς πείθοντες αὐτούς; in IX. xix. 2 the hypocrites are equated with διδασκαλοὶ πονηρίας with no fruit of righteousness; in v. 3 ὑπεκρίθησαν καὶ ἐδιδάξαν ἕκαστος κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἁμαρτανόντων. In Polycarp’s letter to the Phillipians VI:3, he warns against hypocrites who ἀποπλανῶσι κενοὺς ἀνθρώπους. The verb ἀποπλανᾶν is figuratively used for false teachers. The word “hypocrite” is also used in a context of dissimulation, cf. Herm. *Vis.* III. vi. 1, VII. vi, 2, *Mand.* VIII:3.

not only refer to ethical corruption but also to doctrinal deviation and false interpretations.

Luke 13:10-17. Perhaps this implication can be borne out further by the pericope in Luke 13:10-17. The evangelist records Jesus' healing of a woman on the Sabbath who had been crippled for eighteen years. The indignant ruler of the synagogue explained to the crowd how abominable this action was as he interpreted the Law (Exod. 20:9-10; Deut. 5:13-14). Jesus responded in v. 15, "Ὑποκριταί!". There was nothing hypocritical about this synagogue leader's concern for the sanctity of the Sabbath, if pious sham or insincerity is meant by hypocrisy. In v. 16, Jesus attacked the casuistry of the oral tradition which spies out gaps in the Law,⁶³ by arguing from the less to the greater. The hypocrisy is perhaps related to insincerity as it is connected to a false exposition of scripture which can put an ox above a daughter of Abraham—that is, the Law can be stretched to protect one's property. Nevertheless, the charge of hypocrisy is related contextually to a false exposition of the Law.

Matthew 15:1-7. Matthew 15:7 has been especially isolated by commentators as a clue to Matthew's understanding of the contours of hypocrisy, with the focus falling on the quotation from Isaiah which contrasts lip-service with heart-service and genuine commitment. However, the sequential disparity between Matthew 15:39 and Mark 7:6b (Matthew changed *περὶ ὑμῶν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν* to the more typical *ὑποκριταί*) has been neglected. Matthew has sharpened the reproach by placing what is in Mark vv. 8-12 (excluding v. 9) prior to the quotation from Isaiah 29:13 (LXX). In other words, in Matthew's account, the question ("Why do you transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?"), the example of a slippery casuistry which fosters the neglect of parents, and the statement, repeated a second time ("You have made void the word of God because of your tradition"), all *precede* the charge "hypocrites" in v. 7. In Mark's account all of this follows the reproach and the quotation from Isaiah (vv. 6-7) in vv. 8-12. Even if this were not attributable to a deliberate change by Matthew, in the text as it stands the reproach "hypocrites" is related not just to the quotation from Isaiah but extends also to the content of vv. 3-6. Thereby the meaning of "hypocrites" in Matthew 15 differs from that in Mark.

⁶³ Cf. Herman L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, II:199f.

If Matthew deliberately altered the sequence of the pericope, he defined hypocrisy in terms of what is summarized in vv. 3-6 rather than in terms of the quotation in vv. 7-9.⁶⁴

In Matthew's account, therefore, 15:3-6 are the grounds which provoke the charge "hypocrites". In contrast, the charge of hypocrisy in Mark 7:6 is somewhat surprising. The Pharisees asked an honest question which was of serious concern to them: "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders but eat with defiled hands?". Nothing is inherently hypocritical about the concern for purity and the oral tradition. Jesus makes the judgment that they allow their tradition to preclude the commandment of God, but the concern for ritual purity is not hypocrisy. On the other hand, because of the different sequence, Matthew's account provides a better basis for Jesus' characterization of the scribes and Pharisees.

The command of God is contrasted directly with the tradition in v. 3. In Mark, it is the tradition of men; in Matthew it is *your* tradition (cf. 15:6).⁶⁵ God's commandments have been subverted by the scribes and Pharisees' own man-made laws. Verses 4-5, then, provide an illustration of how the tradition has displaced the Law of God, which in this case is a commandment derived from the decalogue. The opposition to God's law has been underscored by the change from Mark's phrase, Μωϋσῆς γὰρ εἶπεν to ὁ γὰρ θεὸς εἶπεν.⁶⁶ The nullification of God's Law by their tradition is then reiterated in v. 6b. Isaiah 29:13, consequently, functions as the conclusion to vv. 3-6; and ὑποκριταί in v. 7 has a special stress in the Matthean sequence that is particularly defined by what has preceded it and not by the quotation. Hypocrisy is false interpretation which wrenches God's Law according to one's own purposes. It must be admitted that the example of their casuistry implies a conscious perversion of the Law for the sake of profit, which entails sham; but hypocrisy is still related to false interpretation.

Summary. From these passages it can be concluded that hypocrisy involves more than pretending to have moral or religious beliefs which one does not actually possess. It also involves more than performing for the sake of an audience. It involves a radical subversion

⁶⁴ Cf. van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 15.

⁶⁵ The emphasis falls heavily on ὑμῶν.

⁶⁶ Cf. J. M. Gibbs, "The Son of God as the Torah Incarnate in Matthew", *StEv*, IV:40-41, (TU, 102), 1968.

of God's will manifested especially in the false interpretation of the scribes and Pharisees. The scribes and Pharisees confidently (whether knowingly or unknowingly) endorse man-made traditions as God's will, when in fact these obstruct the intention of God's Law. The result is aptly expressed by the Qumran phrase דורש חלקות. This association of hypocrisy with the subversion of the commandments of God by the authoritative, legitimate teachers of Israel may explain the conjunction of ὑπόκρισις and ἀνομία in 23:28.

Our thesis is that chap. 23 is addressed to the church, and that its relevance is two-pronged. First, it is addressed to the problem of Israel, and provides an explicit explanation for the failure of Israel as caused by the failure of her self-appointed leaders. They were hypocrites. But this does not mean that their failure only entailed a fatal discrepancy between *Sein und Schein*. They failed as exponents of the Law. The issue was, in modern parlance, their hermeneutics. They failed to understand and teach the will of God as revealed in the Law and the Prophets which was their chief responsibility and, in fact, subverted God's will with their teaching.⁶⁷

Common to the woes in Matthew 23 (excluding v. 14) is the tacit assumption that the responsibility for guiding the people had been delegated to the scribes and Pharisees by God.⁶⁸ The woes have to do with their failure in vital matters: entrance into the kingdom of heaven, proselytism, interpretation of the Law concerning oaths and tithes, and prevention of uncleanness. Minear concluded that, consequently, hypocrisy entailed a "defalcation of responsibility" which not only endangered the appointed leaders before the eyes of God but the ultimate destiny of the nation as well.⁶⁹ This observation should provide a new perspective for the interpretation of the woes. Hypocrisy is not laid to just anyone. It is an accusation lodged against those with greatest responsibility. In Matthew, the crowds are

⁶⁷ It is not just their false existence which Jesus opposed, but their false interpretations and misapprehension of God's will which he confronted. Matthew also condemned their teaching, cf. 7:29; 16:12. Jesus continually asks questions, "Have you read ...?" (12:3; 19:3ff.), and maintains that they did not know what the prophets meant (12:7; 9:11). He accused the Sadducees in 22:29: "You do not know the scriptures nor the power of God". The scribes and Pharisees consistently misinterpreted the mission of Jesus (9:3, 34; 12:24, 38; 16:1-4; 21:15), so that a natural connection is made between false teaching and false existence (12:33; 15:3).

⁶⁸ Minear, "False Prophecy", p. 91. Cf. also Paul Minear, "The Disciples and Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew", *ATR*, Supp. Ser. III, p. 37, 1974.

⁶⁹ Minear, "False Prophecy", p. 19; and "Disciples", p. 37.

never accused of hypocrisy; it is always someone who should know better who is rebuked.⁷⁰

This is particularly true of 24:45-51 which pertains to the servant who is set over the household of his lord. The unfaithful servant is consigned to the fate of the hypocrites (24:51). The Lucan parallel has ἄπιστοι (12:46) instead of ὑποκριταί. This seems to be original since it fits closely the introduction common to both gospels.⁷¹ Therefore, the use of "hypocrites" in 24:51 must be considered intentional on Matthew's part which means that he saw the guilt of the servant as having some affinity with hypocrisy. This guilt is nothing other than the fact that the servant failed in his appointed stewardship over the household. He was guilty of a defalcation of his special trust.

The conclusion is that the reproach "hypocrites" is not as cut and dried as it might appear—it may be rooted in Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees' false interpretation of the Law, and it summarized their failure as God's appointed leaders, rather than just the discrepancy between their *Sein und Schein*.

THE CHARGE OF HYPOCRISY AS A WARNING TO CHRISTIAN LEADERS

As mentioned above, it is believed that chap. 23 is addressed to the church and its relevance is two-pronged. It is an explanation of the fate of Israel and a dire warning to Christian leaders. "Hypocrite" serves not only as a characterization of the scribes and Pharisees in chap. 23, but it also is used in Matthew as a warning for Christians of what not to become. It is an ignominy to be avoided at all costs.

Paul Minear has claimed that an analysis of the audience-identifiers in passages where the charge of hypocrisy occurs reveals a consistent pattern in Matthew. He catalogued the texts under three groups:

⁷⁰ Cf. Frank Stagg, "Matthew", *BBC*, VIII:213.

⁷¹ Mt. 24:45: τίς ἄρα ἐστὶν ὁ πιστὸς δοῦλος καὶ φρονίμος... = Lk. 12:42 except Luke has οἰκονόμος. Ἄπιστος appears elsewhere in Luke only in 9:41 = Mk. 9:19 and Mt. 17:17, and its presence in 12:46 cannot be considered due to any Lucan proclivity to use this word; whereas ὑποκριταί is very common in Matthew. The conclusion is that ὑποκριταί should be viewed as an insertion by the redactor, Matthew. So Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, p. 57, n. 31; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 461; Schulz, *Q*, p. 272. Against this, cf. Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 199; Rudolf Bultmann, "πιστεύω...", *TDNT*, VI:205, n. 234; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 24; and M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, p. 437.

1) those in which the audience is Christian and the hypocrites are Christian (7:5; 24:51), 2) those in which the audience is Christian and the hypocrites are non-believers (6:2, 5, 16; 15:10, 14f.; 23:3-7), and 3) those in which both the audience and the hypocrites are non-believers (23:13-39).⁷² From groups one and two Minear concluded that: "Although the synagogue leaders appear often as villains, the warnings are directed toward the leaders of the churches. The former serve as object lessons for the latter".⁷³ With his analysis of the woes, Minear maintained that the cycle had assumed a "pedagogical function" for Christian scribes.⁷⁴ Minear's study has broken fertile ground for the interpretation of chap. 23 and for understanding the significance of the charge of hypocrisy as it relates to Christian leaders. The Jewish leaders are not only condemned for their hypocrisy, they serve as foils for Christian leaders.⁷⁵ A similar conclusion was reached by van Tilborg from a different perspective. He stated:

The only thing he [Mt.] had in mind was a theological polemic, which not only concerned Judaism but Christianity as well. He used the little amount of historical material that was at his disposal in order to make it clear to his community what they should avoid doing ... The leader of the Jewish people is in the eyes of Mt. the antithesis of the disciple of Jesus. Mt. uses him only so that he can say how the Christian should not be. The anti-pharisaism of Mt. is at the service of his own ethics.⁷⁶

The possibility of the connection between the characterization of the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites and a warning to the church leaders not to become as the hypocrites will be investigated in what follows.

The Audience-Identifier and the Charge of Hypocrisy

Only twice in Matthew's gospel does the reproach "hypocrite" occur when the offenders are specifically noted as being present:

⁷² Minear, "False Prophecy", pp. 86-88.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 87. Minear's hypothesis is that "Since the parallel role of Pharisaic scribes and Christian μαθηταί placed the two groups in direct conflict with one another, Matthew's concern to encourage faithfulness on the part of Christian leaders induced him to use as a negative appeal the phrase 'Don't be like the scribes'". Cf. "Disciples and Crowds", p. 79. It cannot be assumed that "hypocrite" was a reproach restricted only to the Pharisee opponents, cf. Charles E. Carlston, "The Things that Defile (Mark vii.14) and the Law in Matthew and Mark", *NTS*, XV:85, n. 2, 1968-1969, and Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p. 286.

⁷⁴ Minear, "False Prophecy", p. 91.

⁷⁵ Cf. van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 26; and Georg Strecker, "The Concept of History in Matthew", *JAAR*, XXV:225-226, 1967.

⁷⁶ van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 26.

Matthew 15:7, and 22:18. In both of these instances, Matthew has availed himself of Mark's introduction to the pericope with only slight alterations (Mt. 15:1 = Mk. 7:1; Mt. 22:15-16 = Mk. 12:13). In these two passages the characters were already identified in the *Vorlage* which Matthew simply adopted from Mark. This means that the only other passage where the opponents are directly addressed as hypocrites is in chap. 23. However, the direct address, οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, is deceptive.

When the woes begin in 23:13, there is no explicit shift in the audience from that of the crowds and disciples mentioned in 23:1.⁷⁷ Matthew does not indicate that, after addressing the crowds and disciples, Jesus then turned to the Pharisees and delivered the woes. Whether an original audience-identifier has dropped out is irrelevant. In the text as it stands the woes follow immediately upon v. 12 without a transition. In 23:2-7, the scribes and Pharisees are denounced in the third person; in v. 13, there is a sudden shift to the second person from which it is often inferred that the scribes and Pharisees were present. This, however, fails to take seriously Matthew's audience-identifier.⁷⁸

Matthew cannot be held to modern standards which demand rigorous consistency from an author. If the audience was to be determined from the suitability of the content of the material for a particular audience, it would change at least four times in chap. 23, beginning with the crowds and disciples in v. 1, narrowing to the disciples in vv. 8-12, moving to the scribes and Pharisees in vv. 13-36, and broadening to the entire city of Jerusalem in vv. 37-39. But Matthew has made no attempt to re-identify the audience in the discourse so that, unlike the Lucan woes pronounced in the presence of the scribes and Pharisees, the Matthean woes must have the crowds and the disciples of v. 1 as the audience.

This is confirmed by an examination of 22:46. Matthew has deliberately placed this statement, "And no one was able to answer him a word, nor did anyone dare to ask him any more questions from that day", at the conclusion of Jesus' controversy with his opponents, as the horizontal comparison with Mark 12:34b and Luke 20:40

⁷⁷ Cf. J. Arthur Baird, *Audience Criticism and the Historical Jesus*, pp. 134-135.

⁷⁸ Cf. above, pp. 34-41.

reveals.⁷⁹ The negative pronoun, οὐδείς, in 22:46 must refer to the Pharisees of v.41 (absent in Mk. 12:35 and Luke 20:41). The phrase ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας is a Matthean splice which stresses the fact that the debate with the Jewish leaders has ended.⁸⁰ The scribes and Pharisees never appear again after 22:46 in direct confrontation with Jesus in Matthew's gospel. The controversy had ended, and the audience-identifier in 23:1 should be given due weight. Whatever the original Sitz im Leben might have been, or whatever might have been a more consistent arrangement of the setting and audience of the discourse, as it stands, the entire speech is addressed to the crowds and disciples with their benefit in mind.

The woes in chap. 23 are pronounced after Matthew has headlined the Pharisees' resolve to plot Jesus' destruction,⁸¹ after their most cunning disputants have been reduced to mortified silence, and after the reader has been informed that the public debates with the scribes and Pharisees have come to an end. The condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees in chap. 23, therefore, cannot be considered to be addressed to the scribes and Pharisees as Matthew has structured the discourse.⁸² This means that with the exception of 15:7 and 22:18, which are directly borrowed from Mark, every time the reproach "hypocrites" is employed by Matthew, the "hypocrites" themselves are not actually present.⁸³ The disciples or the disciples and the crowds are the audience. This would lend support to the hypothesis that the term ὑποκριταί has as much significance for Matthew as a negative warning for Christians as it has as a deprecatory characterization of the Jewish leaders.

⁷⁹ So Bultmann, *History*, p. 63; Fenton, *Saint Matthew*, p. 360; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 92; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 157; David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 308; Eduard Schweizer, "Matthäus 21-25", *Orientierung an Jesus. Zur Theologie der Synoptiker. Für Josef Schmid*, p. 368; also *Matthew*, p. 426; and Gerhardsson, "Hermeneutic Program", pp. 133-135.

⁸⁰ 'Απ' ἐκείνης is absent in both Mk. 12:34 and Lk. 20:20. Cf. Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, p. 27.

⁸¹ Cf. Mt. 12:14; 22:15.

⁸² This concomitantly rules out the possibility of interpreting the woes as having any redemptive intention, at least from Matthew's standpoint, since the addressees are not present!

⁸³ When the reproach occurs in Mark and Luke (Mk. 7:6; 12:15; Lk. 12:56; 13:15), those reproached are always present.

The Pedagogical Function of the Charge

The passages in Matthew will now be examined in order to ascertain whether or not a pedagogical function for the charge of hypocrisy can be discovered within the context.

Matthew 6:1ff. The exposé of hypocrisy in Matthew 6:2, 5, 16 is directed to the disciples as a warning. The use of the second person plural makes this unequivocal: μή σαλπίσσης ... ὥπερ οἱ ὑποκριταὶ ποιοῦσιν (6:2), οὐκ ἔσεσθε ὡς οἱ ὑποκριταὶ (6:5), ὥπερ οἱ ἔθνικοί (6:7), and finally, μή γίνεσθε ὡς οἱ ὑποκριταὶ (6:16). The hypocrites are negative standards for Christian disciples as these verses provide four examples of what not to do when giving alms, praying and fasting. There is no implication of the scribes and Pharisees. This may only be read into the text.⁸⁴ The term "hypocrites" has a purely pedagogical function. In view of the insertion of v.7 which lampoons the pagan manner of prayer,⁸⁵ no recrimination against Pharisaical piety as such is intended.

Matthew 7:1-5. The pedagogical function of the rebuke "hypocrite" applies also to 7:5 (cf. Lk. 6:41-42). The disciples again comprise the audience, and the scribes and Pharisees need not be alluded to as Klostermann, for example, assumed in his comments.⁸⁶ In the original Sitz im Leben Jesu, the scribes and Pharisees may well have been the targets of this parable.⁸⁷ The Lucan parallel has a veiled reference to these Jewish leaders with the proverbial phrase τυφλὸς τυφλὸν ὀδηγεῖν (6:39),⁸⁸ but both Matthew and Luke's version of this tradition make it clear that it is the disciple who is in danger of hypocrisy. It is not an attack on the Pharisees. It is a warning to the disciple (μή κρίνετε) not to judge without first judging himself. The emphasis is placed upon the sequence of judgment. The hypocrite diagnoses and condemns the specks of sawdust in the eyes of others with a plank in his own eye. This picture may fit the gospel caricature of the Pharisee, but the text plainly addresses the Christian "hypo-

⁸⁴ Against Sand, *Das Gesetz*, pp. 91-92. Bultmann, *History*, p. 52f., noted that there was "an active tendency seeking always to present the opponents of Jesus as Scribes and Pharisees" in the Synoptic tradition which has been carried over even in modern exegesis.

⁸⁵ Nearly all commentators recognized vv. 7-15 as an insertion.

⁸⁶ Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 65.

⁸⁷ Cf. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 167.

⁸⁸ Cf. above, p. 102.

crite". To avoid the tag "hypocrite", the disciple must first size up his own life with the same measuring rod he applies to others or not judge others at all.

Matthew 15:1-12. The *Streitgespräch* in Matthew 15:1ff., as already observed, has substantially borrowed the setting from Mark 7, including the incongruous detail that the Pharisees and scribes came all the way from Jerusalem to Gennesaret in Galilee;⁸⁹ but Matthew has also substantially altered the sequence of this confrontation. The scribes and Pharisees are, therefore, present when they are charged with hypocrisy (15:1, 7); but in Matthew's text, immediately following the quotation from Isaiah, Jesus calls the crowd together to explain both the issues and the charge (15:10-11). Then the disciples approach to relate the agitation of the scribes and Pharisees (15:12); and Jesus explicates further the nature of his charges against them:

¹³... πᾶσα φυτεία ἣν οὐκ ἐφύτευσεν ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ οὐράνιος ἐκριζωθήσεται ¹⁴ἄφετε αὐτούς· τυφλοὶ εἰσιν ὁδηγοὶ τυφλῶν· τυφλὸς δὲ τυφλὸν ἐάν ὁδηγῇ, ἀμφότεροι εἰς βόθυνον πεσοῦνται.

In Mark's text, the quotation from Isaiah is in 7:6-7; the summoning of the crowd is in 7:14; and the reference to the Pharisees as blind guides is absent. In Matthew's arrangement of this pericope, the issue of clean-unclean is not as thoroughly interpreted as it is in Mark; and the condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees is utilized more as a teaching opportunity for the benefit of the disciples. The Pharisees are hypocrites and blind guides. The disciples should ignore them except as examples of what not to be as a leader of the people. Once again, the charge of hypocrisy appears in a pedagogical context with the Christian disciples as the ultimate audience.

Matthew 24:45-51. The final occurrence of ὑποκριταί in Matthew is found in 24:51 (cf. Lk. 12:46, ἄπιστοι), and again the disciples make up the audience (24:3). The theme is the contrast between ὁ πιστὸς δοῦλος and ὁ κακὸς δοῦλος, who transparently personify Christian leaders. The differentiation is quite simple. The faithful servant will be found *doing* by ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ, and he is blessed (μακάριος). The unfaithful servant is found not doing, and he is assigned the same fate as the hypocrites—the hypocrites who say and do not do (23:3; cf. 21:28-31). The insertion of ὑποκριταί by Matthew at this point is considered deliberate and significant.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Bultmann, *History*, p. 52.

⁹⁰ Cf. above, p. 117, n. 71.

By employing the term “hypocrites” at 24:51, Matthew has carefully linked chap. 24 to chap. 23, where the reproach is so very prominent.⁹¹ Schweizer wrote concerning the relation of the two discourses: “Chapter 23 pronounces judgment on Pharisaic Judaism in harsh and oppressive terms; chapter 24 pronounces judgment in equally harsh terms—but this time on the community of Jesus”.⁹² Chapter 23 concerns Jesus’ contemporaries and their fate; chapter 24 concerns Matthew’s contemporaries and their fate. The final pericope of chap. 24 certainly has a pedagogical function. The warning goes out to the Christian leader not to become like this faithless servant or he will suffer the same fate as the hypocrites, which obviously refers to the leaders of Israel condemned in chap. 23. The same judgment that befell the leaders of Israel awaits the unfaithful Christian leader. This indicates that what we have said about the maledictory intent of the woes is correct. It is assumed in v. 51 that the hypocrites have been judged⁹³ and now abide in the place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. This also substantiates the thesis that the leaders of Israel, as hypocrites, are the antithesis of the disciple. Hypocrisy was a defalcation of responsibility on the part of the Jewish leaders which was to be avoided by Christian leaders who have taken the places of the disciples.

⁹¹ Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 464.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ In every case where the reproach “hypocrite” is used there is a definite element of final judgment in the context. In 6:2ff., the “hypocrites” *will not* receive any reward from the Father. This can only imply final judgment. In Mt. 7:2, it is asserted that the measure by which one judges will be the same measure by which one is judged. The severity of the “hypocrite” will meet with severity. In Mt. 15:13, the blind guide “hypocrites” will be uprooted and will fall into a pit (the Pit?). Mt. 24:51 reports that the hypocrites are already in the place characterized by wailing and gnashing of teeth.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE EXEGESIS OF THE INDIVIDUAL WOES IN MATTHEW 23:13-28

In the previous chapter, the conclusion was reached that the basic charge of hypocrisy was not simply an attack on the ethical contradiction in the personal lives of the scribes and Pharisees but a characterization of their failure as the divinely appointed leaders of Israel, particularly as it related to their responsibility in interpretation of the Law. The woes have to do with the scribes and Pharisees' failure in vital matters which endangered the ultimate destiny of those under their tutelage. This chapter will attempt to provide further support for this conclusion through an exegesis of the first six woes. The result will show that each woe is connected directly or indirectly with the scribal misinterpretation of the Law. Finally, the relevance of the woes as a warning to the church leaders will be investigated.

MATTHEW 23:13

The introductory woe in Matthew (23:13) is the climactic woe in Luke (11:52). Whether or not Luke or Matthew preserved the original setting and formulation of the woe, in both settings it is the gravamen which epitomizes the failure of the scribes (lawyers) and Pharisees either as the introduction which subsumes all that follows or as the conclusion which summarizes all that precedes.

Horizontal Analysis

In Luke's text the lawyers (νομικοί) are accused of having taken the key of knowledge (ἔρατε τὴν κλεῖδα τῆς γνώσεως). Both Matthew and Luke have the statement that they do not enter and do not allow (Mt., ἀφιέναι; Lk., κωλύειν) others to enter. In reading the Lucan text the question comes to mind, enter what? Matthew seems to be less obscure. The scribes and Pharisees shut the kingdom of Heaven before men, not entering (the kingdom) themselves, nor allowing others to enter. The metaphor of shutting the kingdom appropriately matches the metaphor of entering the kingdom, while Luke's metaphor of taking the key of knowledge is less apropos.

Matthew makes it clear what the scribes and Pharisees do not enter and do not allow others to enter. Because of this and because of the hellenistic ring of Luke's phrase, most scholars have concluded that Matthew preserved the original formulation of the woe.¹

There is always the possibility that both evangelists were working with different variations of the oral tradition.² Jeremias noted that both Matthew 23:13 and Luke 11:52 may fit a Palestinian background.³ If τῆς γνώσεως in Luke is taken as an appositive genitive ("You have taken away the key to God's kingdom, namely, knowledge"), the kingdom of God is the supreme good. The "key" is knowledge of the Torah which opens up the gate to the kingdom of God.⁴ However, if it is an objective genitive, as is most likely ("You have taken away the key to knowledge"), this requires a hellenistic understanding of knowledge as the supreme good which would seem to be more probable on hellenistic soil.

The presence of distinctive Lucan and Matthean elements in both forms of the allegation raises doubts whether an original formulation of the saying is preserved by either evangelist. In Luke 11:52, the woes are addressed to the lawyers, a peculiarly Lucan group.⁵ Although the concept of γνώσις is not common in Luke,⁶ the verb αἶρεν is frequently employed.⁷ There is no apparent reason, however, why Luke would have altered the concept of kingdom if it had been present in his source by introducing the idea of taking "the key of knowledge".⁸ This change may have been made in a hellenistic

¹ Adolf Harnack, *The Sayings of Jesus: The Second Source of St. Matthew and St. Luke*, p. 100; Erich Klostermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, p. 184; Josef Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 213; F. Heinrichs, *Die Komposition der antipharisäischen und antirabbinischen Weherede bei den Synoptikern*, pp. 46f., as cited by Siegfried Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten*, p. 110; Heinz Eduard Tödt, *The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition*, p. 333; Wolfgang Beilner, *Christus und die Pharisäer. Exegetische Untersuchung über Grund und Verlauf der Auseinandersetzungen*, p. 214; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, p. 435; and M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, p. 424.

² David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 311.

³ Joachim Jeremias, "κλείς", *TDNT*, III:747-748.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 747. Jeremias cited *B. Shab.* 31 a b and *S. Dt.* §321 on 32:25. Cf. Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, I:736-747.

⁵ They appear 7 times in Lk. and only once in Mt.

⁶ Lk. 1:77 is the only other occurrence of the word in the Gospels.

⁷ Αἶρεν: Mt. 19/Mk. 19/Lk. 20/Acts 9.

⁸ Wilfred L. Knox, *The Sources of the Synoptic Gospels*, II:95, claimed that an earlier redactor had made the change.

trajectory prior to Luke's reception of the tradition, but Luke himself may have changed the original phrase "kingdom of God" to "knowledge" with 1:77 in view. The messiah was to bring knowledge of salvation to his people, but the Jewish leaders attempted "to hinder" (ἐκωλύσατε, a Lucan term) this knowledge from becoming known.⁹

On the other hand, the phrase εἰσερχεσθαι εἰς τὴν Βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν is most prominent in Matthew's gospel,¹⁰ as is the phrase ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων.¹¹ It is possible, then, that both Luke and Matthew altered an original woe that referred to αἱ κλείδα τῆς βασιλείας (τῶν οὐρανῶν). For Matthew, this would have been totally unacceptable because the keys of the kingdom had been given to Peter (16:19), the prototype of the disciple; and they could not possibly belong to the scribes and Pharisees.¹² Consequently, Matthew may have changed this phrase to an equivalent statement (κλεῖς → κλειῶ) that did not imply that the scribes and Pharisees were invested with the keys of the kingdom but still suggested their culpability as having had authoritative responsibility in matters relating to the kingdom.

The Meaning of Matthew 23:13

Regardless of the original formulation of the woe and its possible retouching by the evangelists, both 23:13 and 11:52 condemn essentially the same thing—the improbity of those who are considered to have been in a position to open up or shut off access unto salvation. T. W. Manson was on target when he stated that what is condemned in both Matthew and Luke is that the scribes (lawyers) and Pharisees were "the custodians of the revelation of the Old Testament".¹³ They were assigned the task of interpreting God's will

⁹ Κωλύειν: Mt. 1/Mk. 3/Lk. 5/Acts 6; ἀκωλύτως: Acts 1. Cf. Frank Stagg, *The Book of Acts: The Early Struggle for an Unhindered Gospel*; and "The Unhindered Gospel", *RevExp*, LXXI:452-453, 1974.

¹⁰ Mt. 5:20; 7:21; 18:3; 19:23; cf. Mk. 9:47; 10:23-24; Lk. 18:25; and Acts 14:22. For the evidence of this phrase as a Palestinian image, cf. Johannes Schneider, "ἔρχομαι...", *TDNT*, II:677; Jeremias, "κλεῖς", p. 747; and Hans Windisch, "Die Sprüche vom Eingehen in das Reich Gottes", *ZNW*, XXVII:163-192, 1928.

¹¹ Mt. 5:16; 6:1; 10:32, 33; cf. Lk. 12:8. "Ἐμπροσθεν occurs also in 5:24; 6:2; 7:6; 25:32; 26:70; 27:11, 29.

¹² Cf. Jeremias, "κλεῖς", pp. 750-751; and Hubert Frankemölle, "Amtskritik im Matthäus-Evangelium?" *Bib*, LIV:257-260, 1973.

¹³ T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, p. 103.

to men,¹⁴ and had the power and authority to open up the way of the kingdom through the correct interpretation of the Law and the Prophets.¹⁵ However, these masters of Torah, who sat on Moses' seat, obstructed God's will and sidetracked his Law with their contravening traditions, precedents, and pettifogging rules. Their teaching fogged the simple and central truths of the Law with casuistry. This is the basic thrust of 23:13. Matthew does not only have in view the opposition of Pharisaic Judaism to the Christian mission enterprise. This opposition was not something new; it began with the ministry of Jesus and continued after his death.¹⁶ There is no need to assume that Matthew rephrased this woe in order to fit the situation of the church in his time.¹⁷ It fits the *Sitz im Leben Jesu*.

¹⁴ So Alan Hugh McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 333; Adolf Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus*, p. 674; Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 184; Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus*, p. 342; Josef Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 250; G. E. P. Cox, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, p. 158; Jeremias, "κλεις", pp. 748, 750; Floyd V. Filson, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 245; Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 490; Pierre Bonnard, *L'Évangile selon Saint Matthieu*, p. 338; Douglas R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 14; S. Legasse, "L'antijudaïsme dans l'Évangile selon Matthieu", *L'Évangile selon Matthieu: Rédaction et théologie*, p. 423; and Schulz, *Q*, p. 111. Hill, *Matthew*, p. 311, maintained that "the scribal teaching and exposition of Scripture obscured the real issues of belief and conduct; casuistry was making it virtually impossible for men to fulfill the Law of God and devote themselves to that fidelity which leads to the kingdom of heaven". Beilner, *Christus und die Phariseer*, p. 214, recognized this as the most natural interpretation but believed that Matthew was referring to the activity of the scribes and Pharisees.

¹⁵ Jeremias, "κλεις", p. 750, stated: "Mt. 23:13 shows us that the scribes of the time of Jesus claimed to possess the power of the keys in respect of this kingdom. They exercised this by declaring the will of God in Holy Scripture in the form of preaching, teaching, and judging. Thereby they opened up for the congregation a way into this kingdom, i.e., by acting as spiritual leaders of the congregation. Jesus complained that they did not fulfill their task and they thus barred entry into the kingdom of God rather than opening it up. As Lord of the Messianic community He thus transferred the keys of God's royal dominion, i.e., the full authority of proclamation, to Peter". Cf. p. 751.

¹⁶ Many interpreters of 23:13 have considered it a reflection of a current persecution or opposition of the Jews against Matthew's church without acknowledging that this statement conformed to the situation of Jesus as well as the earliest Christian communities. Cf. Mt. 11:16ff.; I Thes. 2:13-16; Acts 4:1ff.; 5:17ff.; Jn. 7:45-52. Cf. also, Arland J. Hultgren, "Paul's Pre-Christian Persecutions of the Church: Their Purpose, Locale, and Nature", *JBL*, XCV:97-111, 1976.

¹⁷ So Ernst Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", *ZTK*, XLVIII:47, 1951, who claimed that 23:13 does not go back to Jesus but to the situation of the Christian community. Cf. also, Wilhelm Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen der Redaktion von Matthäus 23", *Orientierung an Jesus. Zur Theologie der Synoptiker. Für Josef Schmid*, p. 291; Peter

As the teachers of the people of Israel, the scribes and Pharisees are consistently portrayed in Matthew as tragically obtuse. They are shamefully aberrant guides of the blind. When the crowds openly marvel at the exorcisms of Jesus ("Never was anything like this seen in Israel"), the Pharisees pronounce that he works through the prince of demons (9:33-34; cf. 9:3). As it begins to dawn on the crowds that this Jesus might be "the son of David" because of his healing powers, the Pharisees explain once again that it is only by Beelzebul that Jesus cast out demons (12:23-24). The chief priest and scribes react with indignation when Jesus is saluted by the crowds in the Temple, and they attempt to nip such misled enthusiasm in the bud (21:15). Thus, the meaning of the expression "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (10:6; 15:24) becomes more pointed: they are "lost" because those responsible for guiding them have failed (9:36; 13:10-15; 16:3). It is not the false existence of the scribes and Pharisees which imperils the lives of men, but their false teaching

F. Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message*, p. 82, n. 142; and H. Benedict Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, pp. 190-191, who asserted that "the most likely interpretation of the woe is that it reflects the working of the 'Test Benediction' which made it impossible for synagogue worshippers to be Christians as well". On the *Birkath ha Minim*, cf. W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, pp. 275-277; Hare, *Persecution*, pp. 54-56. However, cf. also, P. Schäfer, "Die sogenannte Synode von Jabne. Zur Trennung von Juden und Christen im ersten/zweiten Jh. n. Ch.", *Judaica*, XXXI:54-64, 116-124, 1975, who attempted to show that the division between Jews and Christians had nothing to do with the benedictions, but was a long time process attributable to both sides. Günter Stemberger, "Die sogenannte 'Synode von Jabne' und das frühe Christentum", *Kairos*, XIX:14-21, 1977, has argued that the benedictions were not primarily targeted against the Christians at all and that Matthew did not have Jamnia in his sights when he directed his broadsides against the scribes and Pharisees. Jamnia was not an overriding concern of Matthew (nor of John) as so many have surmised.

The very same attitude toward the theological deviationist reflected in the Test Benediction is to be found in the N.T. Comparable language is encountered in the closing words of 1 Cor.: "If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be anathema. Marana Tha" (16:22). Restrictions governed the celebration of the eucharist (cf. 1 Cor. 11:27-34) and its liturgy. The *Didache* warns outsiders to keep away (9:5) and an exhortation similar in wording to 1 Cor. 16:22 is found: "Let grace come and this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy let him come! If anyone is not let him repent: Marana Tha" (10:6). The division between the church and synagogue must be viewed as a longtime process, beginning as early as the Stephanic group (cf. Acts 11:19-20), during which each side antagonized the other. Paul's attitude toward the Judaizing faction in Galatia is uncompromising—anyone who deviated from the gospel he preached is cursed (Gal. 1:8-9). This stance would not engender mutual love between Judaizing Christians and Pauline Christians, let alone between Jews and Christians. The Test Benediction therefore should be viewed as a ratification in the liturgy of a *fait accompli*, if it were indeed aimed at Christians.

which refused to recognize the significance of Jesus' ministry ("a glutton and drunkard", 11:19) and as a consequence barred entry into the kingdom which he announced (cf. 16:6, 12).¹⁸

MATTHEW 23:15

The second woe in chap. 23 has often been interpreted in terms of the Sitz im Leben of Matthew vis à vis the competitive Pharisaic opposition to Christian missionary activity.¹⁹ It should not be overlooked, however, that the target of the woe is not proselytism per se but the final outcome of the proselytism of the scribes and Pharisees. The proselyte, rather than becoming a son of the kingdom (8:12; 18:3), becomes a double son of Hell.²⁰ This may refer to the phenomenon of new converts sometimes becoming more zealous than their catechists;²¹ or, and perhaps more likely, it refers to their dependence upon "legal and ritual values" for salvation.²² The term proselyte denotes one who has fully accepted circumcision and the requisite submission to the Torah in its entirety.²³ This was especially

¹⁸ Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I:173-177, have shown that the rabbinic understanding of Torah and God's kingdom belonged integrally together. Taking up the Torah was considered to be tantamount to taking up the kingdom of God. Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit. Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Matthäus*, p. 171, noted that kingdom and legislation are thus not to be separated from one another. Cf. also, Schulz, *Q*, p. 111. Therefore, it would follow that false legislation would automatically hinder the entrance into the kingdom.

¹⁹ Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 47; Knox, *Sources*, I:95-96; Cox, *Matthew*, p. 159; Beilner, *Christus und die Pharisäer*, p. 215; and Green, *Matthew*, p. 191. Goulder, *Midrash*, p. 424, with his unique theory about Matthew's connection with the lectionary cycle, believed that the reference to proselytism was seasonally related to the coming Passover.

²⁰ So Schlatter, *Matthäus*, p. 675; Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, p. 353; Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, p. 17, n. 4; Karl Georg Kuhn, "προσήλυτος", *TDNT*, VI:742, n. 160; and Richard R. DeRidder, *The Dispersion of the People of God*, p. 121.

²¹ John L. McKenzie, "The Gospel According to Matthew", *JBC*, p. 103; and Hill, *Matthew*, p. 312.

²² Frank Stagg, "Matthew", *BBC*, VIII:213; cf. Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p. 338.

²³ According to B. Yeb. 46b-47a, a proselyte was required to submit to instruction in the Torah, circumcision, proselyte baptism, and to make a sacrificial offering. In T. Dem. 2:5 it is expressly stated that "A man who does not intend to accept and obey all the Torah cannot be a true proselyte". In the Mekilta on Exod. 18:27 Jethro says "I shall go to my land and tell everybody and convert all the people of my country, leading them to the study of the Torah and bringing them nigh under the wings of the Shekinah" [Mek. Jethro Amalek IV:106-108 (Lauterbach, p. 186)]. Cf. also Sifra *Qedoshim* 8:3; Pes. R. XIV, 57a, and Cant. R. 4:1. This is also the testimony of the New Testament as manifest in Acts 15 which revolves around the inflammatory issue of what would be required of Gentile converts. Cf. also

true in Palestinian circles. Hellenistic Judaism in the Diaspora showed signs of conciliation toward the Gentiles in its missionary activity. These Diaspora missionaries seemed to have been less concerned that Gentile adherents keep the cultic commandments, including circumcision, than that they should believe in the one God of Israel and live according to basic ethical requirements.²⁴ The Palestinian Jews were much more stringent in their requirements as were those Jewish Christians, identified in Acts 15:5 as Pharisees, who demanded circumcision of new converts to Christianity.

The woe in 23:15, then, must be understood in terms of the apposition of proselytism with teaching. This is clearly manifest in Romans 2:17-24 as well as Matthew 28:20. The Jewish teacher considers himself a guide to the blind and a light to those in darkness, obvious references to Gentiles (cf. Rom. 2:24), and he takes it upon himself to train (παιδευτὴν ἁφρόνων) and to teach (διδάσκαλον νηπίων, ἔχοντα τὴν μόρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ). Kuhn scores the point: "Because the Pharisees make the convert to Judaism keep the Law as they themselves do, he becomes

Gal. 5:3 and 6:13 where the formerly zealous Pharisee, Paul, clarifies that circumcision entails keeping the whole law.

On the issue of Jewish proselytism, cf. Kirsopp Lake, "Proselytes and God-fearers", *The Beginnings of Christianity*, V:74-96; Frederick M. Derwacter, *Preparing the Way for Paul: The Proselyte Movement in Later Judaism*; Bernard J. Bamberger, *Proselytism in the Talmudic Period*; William G. Braude, *Jewish Proselytizing in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era: The Age of the Tannaim and Amoraim*; Saul Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, pp. 68-90; Ernst Lerle, *Proselytenwerbung und Urchristentum*; Heinrich Kasting, *Die Anfänge der Urchristlichen Mission*; Rudolf Meyer, "περιτέμνω...", *TDNT*, VI:72-84; Kuhn, "προσήλητος", pp. 727-744; Richard R. DeRidder, *The Dispersion*, pp. 88-128; Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, pp. 541-553.

²⁴ Cf. Neil J. McEleney, "Conversion, Circumcision, and the Law", *NTS*, XX:319-41, 1975. We can find this tendency clearly in Philo (cf. *Spec. Leg.* I:309; IV:177-178; *Virt.* XX:102-104; *Praem.* XXVI:152). Philo later does retract his more liberal interpretation somewhat as he became alarmed by an over-spiritualizing of the Law (cf. *Abr.* 89-93). The classic case of the conversion of Izates of Adiabene, recorded by Josephus, *Ant.* XX:17ff., 24-48, portrays the merchant missionary, Ananias, as being lenient, or, perhaps, expedient, on the question of the circumcision of Izates. Ananias also had the saving of his own skin in mind when he said that Izates could forego circumcision. In contrast to Ananias' attitude is that of Eleazer of Galilee who insisted that Izates be circumcised. He was described as being "extremely strict" (πάνν ... ἀκρίβης). This description is the same which Josephus used to describe the Pharisees (cf. *Bell.* II:162; *Ant.* XVII:41; XX:332; and Acts 26:5). We can infer from this that Eleazer was probably a Pharisee and represented the view of Palestinian Judaism regarding the absolute necessity of circumcision. Circumcision was the *sine qua non* for being a Jew.

a ὑποκριτής as they are and therewith a υἱὸς γεέννης”.²⁵ The Christian disciple is also commanded to make proselytes through baptism and *teaching* (28:19-20). The difference is that they teach the commandments of Jesus who was the Torah incarnate. Therefore, 23:15 condemns the proselytism of the scribes and Pharisees who make double sons of Hell because of their false interpretation of the Law that denies Jesus as the Messiah and demands obedience to the ceremonial law for salvation.

²⁵ Kuhn, “προσήλυτος”, p. 742. That instruction was fundamental for making a proselyte may be gathered from the well-known account of the three proselytes, where Hillel’s gentleness is contrasted with the great impatience of Shammai (B. *Shab.* 31a). Shammai had the nasty habit of rapping “prospects” on the head with his builder’s cubit when they came to inquire about becoming proselytes. One can understand Shammai’s rage, provoked by the audacious heathens’ ignorance, when they asked to be converted to Judaism, one, on the condition of being taught “Sadducean” theology, another, that he be told the whole Law while standing on one foot (i.e., “In a nutshell”), and another, on the condition that he be made High Priest. In contrast, Hillel dealt kindly with their naiveté but led them under “the wings of the Shekinah” through careful long term instruction.

It is significant for understanding Matthew’s relationship to Judaism that he included such a condemnation of the results of Jewish proselytism. The seeds of the attitude reflected in 23:15 were sown early and may go back to Jesus when Jewish missionaries were more active. It is certainly encountered in Paul’s vigorous reaction to the activities and theology of the “Christian” Judaizers in Galatia, and Matthew appears to have adopted a similar position to that of Paul. Urbach observed concerning the respective mission endeavors of Jews and Christians that even though they both stood over against the common enemy of idolatry they never became mission partners. He found an explanation for this circumstance in the fact that the Christian mission was conducted on the basis of the postulate “that the election of Israel had been completely annulled and with it the age of Torah and precepts had likewise passed away, and that the Church, ‘which had been gathered from the Gentile peoples’ had replaced the Congregation of Israel”. Obviously, this postulate undermined the very cornerstone of the Jewish faith; no common mission endeavor could be expected, and the attitude toward the other’s converts could only be negative. Urbach was referring in this statement to the era of Origen, but evidence emerges from Matthew indicating that it applies equally well to his situation. Here in 23:15 the proselytism is condemned *not* because the missionaries are dissimulators but because the theological premises undergirding the mission are wrong. This woe reflects a radical critique of the understanding of Torah, circumcision, and Israel in the official Jewish theology. Circumcision and its theological implications have been tacitly rejected by Matthew because it is notably absent from the commission in Mt. 28:19-20.

In Tg. Neof. Gen. 15:17, Gehenna is described as a fiery furnace where “the wicked fell because the wicked rebelled against the Law in their life in this world. But the just, because they observed it, will be delivered from this affliction” (cf. also Tg. Neof. Gen. 3:24). Matthew’s perspective is altogether different. Gehenna is the destination of those who obey the precepts of the Law of Moses but rebel against the Law of Jesus. Matthew’s view of the proselytes of the scribes and Pharisees is not much different from Paul’s view of the spiritual result of the Judaizer’s efforts in the Galatian congregation (cf. Gal. 3:3, 10-11; 4:9-11, 27-31; 5:1-6).

MATTHEW 23:16-22

The import of vv. 16-22 should also be viewed as directly relating to the teaching activity of the scribes and Pharisees. Hummel, among others, has misinterpreted the significance of this woe by homing in on its ostensibly conservative attitude toward the cult.²⁶ Certainly, vv. 16-22 comprise traditional material which Matthew has utilized at this point as a woe;²⁷ but one must seriously question whether an implicit affirmation of the cult can be inferred from Matthew's use of these verses.²⁸ The purport of these words for Matthew and his community cannot be discerned without careful attention to the context. When traditional material is used, it is the way in which it is used which reveals the intention of the evangelist. Gaston has maintained, with reference to those passages in Matthew which have often been assembled for their conservative attitude toward the cult, that they are "conservative" in language only.²⁹ This reflection in vv. 16-22 has no direct reference to cultic matters; it simply contains a neat illustration that could serve to expose the shallow casuistry of scribal teaching that sought to make oaths legitimate through their wording. It is, therefore, no different from the example in Matthew 5:21-26 which simply stressed the fact that "the need for reconciliation ... outweighs all cultic considerations".³⁰

²⁶ Reinhart Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium*, pp. 78-82.

²⁷ There was no temple gold, altar, or temple to swear by after A.D. 70. Cf. Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 78; Knox, *Sources*, II:23; Sjef van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew*, p. 105; and Gerhard Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law", *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, p. 145, n. 3.

²⁸ Lloyd Gaston, *No Stone on Another: Studies in the Significance of the Fall of Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 94.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.* Gaston went on to say of 5:21-26:

No actual sacrifice was envisaged at all, for the saying speaks as if the one offering sacrificed his gift on the altar, whereas in fact only the priest was permitted to approach the altar with the victim. Further, if one can at the last minute 'remember' that one needs to be reconciled, then there is no inner connection between the sacrifice and the quarrel. ... No one who has properly understood the saying would ever think of returning to the altar to continue his sacrifice. Couched in such general language, the saying, far from indicating an approval of sacrifice, does not say anything different from the Hosea word 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice' quoted in Mt. 9:13 and 12:7.

Cf. also John P. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew's Gospel*, p. 167.

In addition to the problem of the supposed affirmation of the sacrificial cultus, a further problem emerges in vv. 16-22 from the apparent contradiction between 5:34-37, which says do not swear at all (ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν μὴ ὀμόσαι ὅλως), and 23:20-22, which seems to imply that all oaths are binding even when God's name is intentionally avoided. The concluding statement of the woe makes a positive assertion that all forms of oaths, regardless of circumlocutions employed, ultimately involve God.³¹ But to consider this to be a positive affirmation of oaths is a serious misinterpretation. First of all, the explicit words of Jesus would prevail for both Matthew and his readers so that 5:34-37 would have been accepted as normative.³² Secondly, Jesus is portrayed as attacking the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees. The context is condemnation, not endorsement. Schweizer's observation that vv. 20-22 pick up the statement in 5:34-35 and simply reverse the argument—even the apparently inoffensive oaths involve God because Temple gold and Temple, offering and altar, heaven and throne all involve God—is convincing.³³ Consequently, vv. 16-22 cannot be construed as an indirect affirmation of oaths but must be understood in terms of a proscription of a certain kind of casuistry connected with oaths.³⁴ It now remains to be shown why this casuistry was condemned.

One facet of 23:16-22 has gone unrecognized and many commentators have subsequently been sidetracked. Saul Lieberman made a perceptive study of the conflicting evidence on oaths and vows in rabbinic literature and maintained that the rabbis campaigned against the abuses of oaths and vows among the unlearned masses.³⁵ The unschooled tended to cloud the distinctions between an oath, which compelled personal obligation, and a vow, which pronounced some-

³¹ Cf. McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 334; Gustaf Dalman, *The Words of Jesus: Considered in the Light of Post-Biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language*, p. 206; Schlatter, *Matthäus*, p. 678; Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 79; and McKenzie, "Matthew", p. 103.

³² Cf. Jas. 5:12: πρὸ πάντων δέ, ἀδελφοί μου, μὴ ὀμνύετε, μήτε τὸν οὐρανὸν μήτε τὴν γῆν μήτε ἄλλον τινὰ ὀρκον· ἦτω δὲ ὑμῶν τὸ Ναὶ ναὶ καὶ τὸ Οὐ οὐ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπὸ κρίσιν πέσητε.

³³ Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 433. G. Barth, *Tradition*, p. 145, n. 3, is surely correct when he maintained that 23:16-22 is not proof that Matthew regarded only false swearing as forbidden and not swearing altogether. It was "no command for the Church, but an accusation against the Pharisees".

³⁴ Cf. Johannes Schneider, "ὀμνύω", *TDNT*, V:183.

³⁵ Saul Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, pp. 115-143.

thing personally forbidden.³⁶ They also tended to use oaths on all occasions and to regard improperly formulated oaths as valid. This apparently was due to a pious fear of a real oath; and, as a consequence, the people were inclined to confirm their veracity by swearing by substitutes such as holy objects, components of the universe, or anything that might come to mind, however ridiculous (Lieberman cited "by the life of the fig-picker" as one example³⁷). Some rabbis apparently made some concessions to the widespread practice of the people and respected their oath formulations, but others struggled against the use of invalid oaths.³⁸ The latter sought to teach that oaths were sacred and not to be transgressed, on the one hand; while, on the other, they protested, albeit unsuccessfully, that not all oaths were to be considered valid. According to Lieberman, only the mention of the word שבויעה or the divine name (or attributes) made an oath binding.³⁹ This means that some rabbis were just as concerned as Jesus was to stress that an oath was no substitute for veracity—it was not to be used haphazardly, and a real oath was not to be evaded.⁴⁰ One may not legitimately infer from 23:16-22 that the scribes and Pharisees were attacked by Jesus because they used casuistry to evade the obligations of oaths. The difference between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees seems to have centered on Jesus' total rejection of oaths, while the Jewish teachers ascribed major importance to the proper formulation of valid oaths. In *Tosefta Nedarim* 1:3, for example, "Jerusalem", "Temple", and "altar" were specifically excluded as terms which made an oath binding.⁴¹ The concern was not over how an oath might be formulated so that the obligation could be circumvented; the concern was over what

³⁶ For the texts cf. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, pp. 115-143; and Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I:321-337, 931-932.

³⁷ Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, pp. 127-128.

³⁸ The opinion expressed by W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 245, that the rabbis attempted to check "the too frequent and erroneous use of oaths" by allowing and encouraging certain substitute oaths, represents the majority opinion which Lieberman challenged. Cf. also Jacob Mann, "Oaths and Vows in the Synoptic Gospels", *AJT*, XXI:266, 1917.

³⁹ Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, p. 133. He argued that "substitutes" or "handles" were not artificially invented by the rabbis for the purpose of checking the abuse of sacred formulas. They were expressions already used by the people which the rabbis attempted to regulate (cf. p. 116).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁴¹ Cf. *M. Sheb.* 4:13 and *M. Ned.* 1:3.

words must be used which made an oath valid and what words when used made it invalid.

Lieberman's analysis of oaths and vows means that Matthew accurately portrayed Jesus as contending with a Pharisaic position that only oaths which employed the divine name or attributes (such as "his throne") were binding.⁴² An exception in the formula of a binding oath was made only for the word *korban*.⁴³ Although it was properly a vow word, it could also represent an oath. This explains why in our passage (vv. 16, 18) the gold of the Temple and the gift of the altar could be considered valid as part of an oath formula because the people were in the habit of dedicating things to the Temple with the word *korban*.⁴⁴ Josephus documented this when he described the uproar caused by Pilate because he used τὸν ἱερὸν θησαυρὸν, καλεῖται δὲ κορβανᾶς, for construction of an aqueduct (*Bell.* II:175). Matthew 27:6 records the judgment of the high priest about what should be done with the bribe of Judas: Οὐκ ἔξεστιν βαλεῖν αὐτὰ εἰς τὸν κορβανᾶν, ἐπεὶ τιμὴ αἱματός ἐστιν.⁴⁵ It can, therefore, be inferred that in vv. 16 and 18 the Temple gold and the altar gift were binding as part of an oath because they were connected with the term *korban*, while the Temple and altar, though holy objects, were illegitimate substitutes in an oath formula.

It can now be clearly seen that Jesus' criticism of the casuistry of the scribes and Pharisees did not allow for the legitimacy of oaths

⁴² Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, pp. 133-134. Because Jacob Mann read the evidence of the talmudic tradition (*M. Ned.* 1:3) differently as permitting and encouraging vows with the declaration "like the temple" (כְּמִזְבֵּחַ) or "like the altar" (כְּהִיכָל), he concluded that Mt. 23:16-22 completely contradicts the actual practices concerning vows. He found it, therefore, "difficult to account for Matthew's denunciation of the Pharisees in this particular instance of the formulae of vows". ("Oaths and Vows", p. 266). Lieberman's reconstruction of the rabbinic concerns, on the other hand, is supported by the Matthean woe, which must be considered as primary evidence for the practice in Jesus' day; and it is the only way sense can be made out of the charge.

⁴³ On *korban*, cf. J. H. A. Hart, "Corban", *JQR*, XIX:615-650, 1907; Mann, "Oaths and Vows", pp. 260-274; Samuel Belkin, "Dissolution of Vows and the Problem of Anti-Social Oaths in the Gospels and Contemporary Jewish Literature", *JBL*, LX:227-234, 1936; George W. Buchanan, "Some Vow and Oath Formulas in the N.T.", *HTR*, LVIII:319-326, 1965; Zeev W. Falk, "On Talmudic Vows". *HTR*, LIX:309-312, 1966; and Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, "The Aramaic Qorbān Inscription from Jebel Hallet Et-Turi, Mark 7:11, Mt. 15:5", *JBL*, LXXVIII:60-65, 1959.

⁴⁴ Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, p. 134; cf. also Mann, "Oath and Vows", p. 266.

⁴⁵ Cf. also CD 16:13.

nor was it simply an attack on the casuistical abuse of oaths.⁴⁶ Jesus argued that the Pharisaic distinction between valid and invalid oaths was fallacious—all oaths involve God. Jesus was indifferent to the fine distinctions between valid and invalid oaths because he presupposed that all oaths should be preempted by truthful statements. Bertram correctly recognized that Jesus was attacking false teachers and false teaching in vv. 16-22. What was at issue was not the content—whether oaths are legitimate or illegitimate with the use of the terms Temple, Temple-gold, altar, altar-gift, heaven, throne of God—but “the mode of thought” behind the content.⁴⁷ Jesus rejected oaths entirely and exposed the specious casuistry, which made some oaths valid and others invalid, for what it was. The scribes and Pharisees are therefore condemned in this woe as false teachers. The primary issue is their interpretation.

This is confirmed by the address ὀδηγοὶ τυφλοὶ in v. 16 (μωροὶ καὶ τυφλοὶ, v. 17; τυφλοὶ, v. 19) which implies that scribes and Pharisees were “guides”, but false guides. This charge would apply to their guidance as teachers.⁴⁸ The epithet, τυφλοὶ,⁴⁹ repeated three times, and the term, ὀδηγοὶ, would have caused the reader to recall its first appearance in Matthew 15:14 where the false teaching of the scribes and Pharisees also was at issue.

MATTHEW 23:23-24

The fourth woe may also be presumed to pertain to the failure of the scribes and Pharisees in their appointed office as interpreters of the Law. Again, their culpability relates specifically to their exposition of the Law.

⁴⁶ Against Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 185; and Schneider, “ὁμνύω”, p. 183.

⁴⁷ G. Bertram, “μωρός...”, *TDNT*, IV:845.

⁴⁸ Wolfgang Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel. Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums*, p. 200; James M. Gibbs, “Purpose and Pattern in Matthew’s Use of the Title ‘Son of David’”, *NTS*, X:451-452, 1964; and Alexander Sand, *Das Gesetz und die Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Evangeliums nach Matthäus*, pp. 89-90. Cf. Jn. 9:39-41.

⁴⁹ According to Wolfgang Schrage, “τυφλός...”, *TDNT*, VIII:292, the reference to being blind is associated with teaching. From the Pharisee’s perspective, the blindness of those led by blind leaders consisted of their ignorance of the Law and the tradition. However, the woes reverse the tables, the charge of blindness does not contrast reality and appearance, but attacks the false exposition of the Law which can neither perceive nor expound on the essentials. Schrage wrote (p. 293): “Though they think they are ὀδηγοὶ τυφλῶν, in truth they are ὀδηγοὶ τυφλοὶ”.

Horizontal Analysis

The comparison of Matthew's text with Luke 11:42 is instructive. Matthew and Luke differ as to what was being tithed. Matthew has τὸ ἡδύοσμον καὶ τὸ ἄνηθον καὶ τὸ κύμινον, while Luke included τὸ ἡδύοσμον καὶ τὸ πήγανον καὶ πᾶν λάχανον.⁵⁰ Strack-Billerbeck have shown that rabbinic exegesis had widened the circle of produce which was to be tithed by the inclusion of vegetables and greens, and the question of what forms of produce came under the law of the tithe was a subject of debate in the first century.⁵¹ The more rigorous interpretation considered every natural growth to be subject to the tithe (cf. Lk. 18:12b); while the more humane interpretation understood Deuteronomy 14:22-23 literally—only grain, wine and oil were required to be tithed.⁵²

Manson has pointed out that the emphasis in Luke falls more on the idea of tithing things not required by the Law in order to gain a reputation for piety.⁵³ If this were Luke's intention, it would fit the notion of hypocrisy whereby one attempts to represent himself as better than he really is; but this is not the case for Matthew 23:23.⁵⁴ The basic charge in 23:23-24 is that the scribes and Pharisees have devoted themselves to minutiae at the expense of the essentials of the Law. There is no suggestion of a conscious hypocrisy; they have extravagantly majored in minors. This must be the interpretation

⁵⁰ Luke's list of what was tithed seems secondary for these reasons. First, none of the herbs listed by Luke were subject to the tithe. Rue was specifically excluded (M. *Sheb.* 9:1), and "every herb" is certainly inaccurate. Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 434, wrote that it "destroys the sting of the saying which speaks only of absurd trifles". There is a striking similarity to Luke's sequence of herbs in M. *Uktz.* 1:2 ("mint, rue, wild herbs and garden herb"), but the context is not tithing. Dietrich Correns, "Die Verzehntung der Raute: Luk xi 43 und M Schebi ix 1", *NovT*, VI:10-112, 1963, claimed that Luke referred to cultivated herbs, not wild herbs, which, therefore, were subject to the tithe. However, rue was grown as a border in Greek gardens and would have been well known to Luke's readers so that it is possible that Luke added it along with "every herb" in an attempt to convey the absurdity in more familiar terms. Cf. Goulder, *Midrash*, p. 425. On the other hand, in Matthew's list, dill and cummin were specifically noted in the Mishnah as liable to the tithe (cf. M. *Maas.* 4:5, *Dem.* 2:1), while the leaf of mint is possibly referred to in M. *Sheb.* 7:1. Secondly, Matthew preserves a chiasmic structure: a) mint, dill, cummin; b) justice, mercy, faith; b) these, a) others, which is lost in Luke. Cf. J. C. Fenton, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, p. 373; Harnack, *Sayings*, p. 100; and Schulz, *Q*, p. 100.

⁵¹ Cf. Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I:932; and McKenzie, "Matthew", p. 103.

⁵² Cf. Num. 18:12; Lev. 27:30; and Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I:933.

⁵³ Manson, *Saying*, p. 236. Cf. Green, *Matthew*, p. 191.

⁵⁴ Against Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 200.

of these verses because of the addition of τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου in v. 23,⁵⁵ absent in Luke, and the addition of the hyperbole in v. 24,⁵⁶ which reduces the concerns of the Pharisees to an absurdity.

The Meaning of Matthew 23: 23-24

Verse 24 must be considered the clue to Matthew's understanding of v. 23 since the metaphor is not in its original context; it reinterprets v. 23.⁵⁷ What was noted about the epithet "blind guides" above must also apply to vv. 23-24. It connotes once again the failure of the scribes and Pharisees in their teaching. They have become oblivious to what is great and little in the Law.⁵⁸ The phrase τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου does not contrast the "harder" commands from the "easier", but the "weightier" from the "trifling".⁵⁹ The distinction is made as to what commands are important in the eyes of God, whereas the scribes were impervious to any distinction whatsoever.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ This phrase is considered a Matthean addition by Barth, *Tradition*, p. 80; Sand, *Das Gesetz*, p. 40; Schulz, *Q*, p. 100; Hubert Frankemölle, *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi. Studien zur Form und Traditionsgeschichte des "Evangeliums" nach Matthäus*, p. 301; against Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 39; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 136, n. 4; and Robert Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition*, pp. 178-179, who regard it as belonging to the pre-Matthean tradition.

⁵⁶ So Knox, *Sources*, I:96; Josef Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 327; van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders*, p. 106; and Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 180.

⁵⁷ van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 106.

⁵⁸ Otto Michel, "κάμηλος", *TDNT*, III:594; and Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, pp. 179-180.

⁵⁹ Gottlob Schrenk, "βάρος...", *TDNT*, I:558.

⁶⁰ G. Barth, *Tradition*, pp. 77-78, contended that for the rabbinical understanding of the Law there could be "no question of raising one commandment above the others in importance", although distinctions were made between "heavy" and "light". Cf. Davies, *Setting*, p. 95; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p. 340; and Sand, *Das Gesetz*, p. 40. Cf. also, Israel Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, I:18-29; Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I:901-905; and Urbach, *The Sages*, pp. 345-365, for discussions of rabbinic texts. Urbach explained the variety of answers to the question of the relative value of the commandments as attributable to the exigencies of the rabbis' situation:

On the one hand we find dicta that proclaim the absolute equality of all the precepts, and on the other we encounter clear distinctions drawn between more important and less important commandments, and methods of classifying precepts and transgressions according to various criteria. An exhaustive study of the sources shows us that they do not indicate so much disagreement between the sages over principles as they reflect the result of reciprocal influence between doctrinal approaches and the experiences of the Rabbis regarding the realities of observing the precepts. The formulation and style of the evaluative dicta were largely determined by the desire to influence these realities and the possibility of directing them.

Bonnard was correct when he saw that such a distinction entailed "a veritable reinterpretation of Jewish piety",⁶¹ and G. Barth has stated:

By the insertion of τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου Matthew gives expression to a different valuation of the individual parts of the law: judgment, mercy and faith are expressly assessed by the evangelist as the weightier commandments and put before all others.⁶²

This, according to Barth, is a widening of the love-commandment which for Matthew is "the canon for the interpretation of the whole Torah".⁶³ The fourth woe, therefore, takes issue specifically with the scribal interpretation of the law:⁶⁴ the scribes and Pharisees not only neglected the weightier commandments, they failed to discern the intention of the Law as the manifestation of God's will. They placed the tithing of garden herbs on an equal level with justice, mercy and faith.

The difficult statement in v. 23, ταῦτα ἔδει ποιῆσαι κακεῖνα μὴ ἀφιέναι, is found also in Luke (παρεῖναι).⁶⁵ It consequently derives

Matthew clearly perceived a distinction between important and less important commandments. Cf. Mt. 5:19, 12:1-8, 15:3-6, 22:36-40, and 7:12.

⁶¹ Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p. 340.

⁶² G. Barth, *Tradition*, p. 80.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 78; cf. Günther Bornkamm, "Das Doppelgebot der Liebe", *Neutestamentliche Studien für R. Bultmann*, pp. 92-93; "End-Expectation and Church in Matthew", *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, pp. 31-32; "πρέσβυς...", *TDNT*, VI:662; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 147; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, p. 301; and Birger Gerhardsson, "The Hermeneutic Program in Matthew 22:37-40", *Jews, Greeks and Christians: Religious Cultures in Late Antiquity. Essays in Honor of William David Davies*, pp. 129-150.

Mt. 23:23 may reflect the question of the scribe in 22:36 (ποία ἐντολή μεγάλη ἐν τῷ νόμῳ; Mk. has πρώτη πάντων). Mt. 7:12; 9:13; 12:7; and 22:40 are all redactional passages where Jesus formulated the summation of the Law. Mt. 23:23 would fit well the prophetic understanding of God's will; cf. Isa. 1:17; Jer. 5:28; Hos. 6:6; Amos 5:21-24; Mic. 6:8; and Zech. 7:9.

⁶⁴ G. Barth, *Tradition*, p. 85. Matthew drew far-reaching conclusions from the love commandment beyond 22:34-40 which certainly derived from Jesus. Barth noted:

As it here to do with the editorial interpretation of the evangelist, however, Matthew here stands alone among the Synoptic writers. With the meaning of the commandment of love as the essence of the law the contrast to the rabbinite is given also by teaching. He is linked with the rabbinite in holding fast to the whole law; he parts from it in his interpretation. And not merely in the interpretation of particular questions, but this contrast goes already to fundamental depths and leads to a quite different understanding of the law.

Cf. Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 52; and Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp. 300-304.

⁶⁵ The phrase is not found in Marcion or D; and Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 186; Harnack, *Sayings*, p. 101; Manson, *Sayings*, p. 98; and Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 248, regard it as an interpolation into the text of Luke

from an earlier tradition which cannot be pressed too far theologically.⁶⁶ In Matthew's text, the focus is clearly upon v. 24 rather than v. 23b. Banks incisively noted:

Matthew, rather than evidencing a nomistic tendency in this passage, has by his inclusion within and addition to this verse, only highlighted the Pharisaic failure as against the Law (v. 23b), through a concentration upon insignificant elements in their *tradition* (v. 24).⁶⁷

The fourth woe, rather than being an indirect affirmation of Pharisaic legalism, must be viewed as an attack on the exegesis of the Torah by the scribes and Pharisees which has effectively obscured the intention of God's will by straining out gnats while swallowing a camel.⁶⁸ The scribes and Pharisees are false teachers.

It is significant that the two references to Hosea 6:6 by Jesus occur in a context where the legalistic preoccupation of the Pharisees has

from Matthew and not from Q. But there is no apparent reason why this phrase would have been added to Luke's text at a later time. One can easily understand why it would have been omitted by Marcion, and one can surmise why commentators would rather attribute this saying to "Jewish" Matthew than to Jesus. The textual evidence and intrinsic probability strongly suggest that this phrase was originally in Luke's text. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that the woe attacks the hypocritical piety of those "who simulate piety by paying tithes where none are required" as Manson contended (cf. n. 53 above).

⁶⁶ Because this verse seems to be a conservative affirmation of Pharisaic amplification of the Law, many interpretations have been proposed: 1) It is considered to have been derived from the Jewish Christian tradition. B. Harvie Branscomb, *Jesus and the Law of Moses*, pp. 212-213, claimed it was impossible for Jesus to have said this because: a) it appears to be a defense of Jesus against the criticism that he neglected the Law; b) it was unlike Jesus to add a qualifier; and c) it is historically and psychologically unbelievable that Jesus would have demanded such minutiae in tithing. Cf. Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 48; G. Barth, *Tradition*, p. 80; and Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 139. 2) It does not seem to be derived from Matthew himself in light of Mt. 15:20 and 23:26. Julius Schniewind, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 233, considered the remark ironical and analogous to Mt. 9:16-17 and 22:21. 3) W. D. Davies, *Christian Origins and Judaism*, p. 48, pointed to Jesus' conservatism in practice and maintained that it was unlikely that this saying would have been invented by the church. Many have concluded on the same grounds that the extreme Pharisaic legislation is defended so long as the important commands are not forgotten. Cf. McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 335; Schmid, *Matthäus*, p. 252; Helmut Merkel, "Jesus und die Pharisäer, NTS, XIV:199, 1968; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 434; and Paul S. Minear, "False Prophecy and Hypocrisy in the Gospel of Matthew", *Neues Testament und Kirche. Für Rudolf Schnackenburg*, p. 89.

⁶⁷ Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 180.

⁶⁸ The emphasis is on the contrast between the smallest and largest things in the Palestinian world (cf. Mt. 19:24; B. *Shab.* 12a), but it should not be overlooked that *both* are unclean (cf. Lev. 11:4, 41). In light of v. 24, the tithing of garden herbs in v. 23 are not only less significant when compared to justice, mercy and faith; they are insignificant.

tended to efface the humane issues. The Pharisees questioned the disciples (9:10ff.) as to why Jesus condescended to eat with tax collectors and sinners. When Jesus learned of their reaction he said: πορευθέντες δὲ μάθετε τί ἐστίν, ἢ ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν. Once again, when the Pharisees were up in arms over the disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath (12:1ff.), Jesus pronounced that they had failed to recognize (v. 6) that one τοῦ ἱεροῦ μετίζον was here, and that they had not yet learned from Hosea 6:6. The scribes and Pharisees according to Matthew's presentation, had failed to understand God's basic desire for mercy and to recognize Jesus as the promised messiah. Mercy was a primary requisite for Christian disciples (Mt. 5:7; 6:12) and particularly for church leaders (chap. 18; cf. 18:33, ἔδει). Faith also was a primary characteristic of those who entered the kingdom and this was precisely what was lacking in Israel (cf. 8:10; 15:28; 21:21f.; also 9:2, 22, 29). It was the lack of faith which ultimately resulted in the final rejection of Israel (21:32; 27:32). This is because, as Frankemölle has recognized, κρίσις, ἔλεος, and πίστις were "der erschöpfende Skopus des rechten Verhaltens des Bundespartners zum Bund, d.h. zum Willen Gottes".⁶⁹ As leaders of the covenant people, the scribes and Pharisees had failed to live up to the basic requirements of God's covenant.

MATTHEW 23:25-26

The fifth and sixth woes have caused some consternation for interpreters because of an apparent internal inconsistency in their logic and because of the striking divergence between Matthew and Luke. Ostensibly, Matthew and Luke deal with the same topics, the cleansing of cups and plates (Mt. 23:25-26 = Lk. 11:39-41), and the defilement caused by contact with graves (Mt. 23:27-28 = Lk. 11:44), which suggests a common source at some point in the tradition; but the development of these topics differs markedly. The scholarly consensus is that either one, or, more likely, both of the evangelists did not grasp the point of the original saying (23:25 = 11:39) and clumsily tried to make sense of it, or that they received an already bungled

⁶⁹ Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp. 301-302. Hos. 6:6 and Mic. 6:8 both stand in the context of a reproach against Israel for breaking the covenant.

version which they passed on, or, again, clumsily tried to make sense of it.⁷⁰ The upshot is that both evangelists wound up with a garbled echo of some original word of Jesus, and most would see evidence of redactional activity on the part of both evangelists.⁷¹ Since these two woes provide the strongest evidence in chap. 23 that Matthew understood hypocrisy in terms of a radical disparity between inside and outside, they will merit special attention.

In 23:25-26, it would seem on first glance that Matthew condemns the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees because their external rectitude was merely a pious veneer that concealed an internal corruption.⁷² But because of the recurrence of the adjective "blind" which has been related especially to the failure of the scribes as teachers and guides of Israel, it is proposed that this first glance is off the mark. Once again, it has to do with the failure of the religious leaders of Israel in their responsibility to profess the will of God to their charges. The argument is of some complexity but rests upon a literal interpretation of the woe which, it is believed, derives essentially unchanged by Matthew from an actual dispute of Jesus with Shammaite Pharisees.

The Figurative Interpretation of Matthew 23:25-26

Wolfgang Trilling isolated three possibilities for unravelling the meaning of vv. 25-26.⁷³ The woe may be interpreted literally as referring to the purity of the vessels and their contents, or figuratively as referring to the inside and outside of the Pharisees, or, finally, both literally and figuratively—that is, v. 25 should be understood literally and v. 26 figuratively.⁷⁴ By far the most prevalent understanding of these verses is the figurative one whereby the woe is construed to be a personal attack on the very existence of the

⁷⁰ So Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 49; Knox, *Sources*, I:98; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 201; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp. 19-20; Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", pp. 292-293; and Schweizer, p. 434.

⁷¹ Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, p. 147; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 50; Knox, *Sources*, I:97; Strecker, *Der Weg*, pp. 31f.; Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 492; and Schulz, *Q*, pp. 95f.

⁷² So Günter Klein, "Rein und unrein Mt. 23, 25. Lc. 11, 27.42", *ZNW*, VII:252-253, 1906.

⁷³ Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 200.

⁷⁴ Ibid. Trilling cited Josef Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 327; Manson, *Sayings*, pp. 231f.; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", pp. 49-50; and Theodor Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus*, p. 655, respectively.

Pharisees.⁷⁵ Several reasons have prompted interpreters to view vv. 25-26 as a parable about the inward purity of men.

The most compelling reason, as Haenchen has argued,⁷⁶ is that v. 26 seems absolutely meaningless if the literal cleansing of vessels is intended: καθάρισον πρῶτον τὸ ἐντὸς τοῦ ποτηρίου ἵνα γένηται καὶ τὸ ἐκτὸς αὐτοῦ καθαρόν. It would seem to be nonsensical to assume that the purification of the inside of the cup would in any way make the outside of the cup clean unless one also assumes some kind of exosmosis hitherto unknown.⁷⁷ The remedy appears to be applicable only to the hearts of men, not cups. Because of this, Haenchen considered v. 26 to be a metaphorical reiteration of Matthew's attack on hypocrisy.⁷⁸ In the same manner, T. W. Manson believed that although Matthew and Luke stated things much differently, they agreed in essence. The meaning is that "any effective cleansing must begin from within, from the heart".⁷⁹

It must be granted that this interpretation is quite compatible with Jesus' teaching elsewhere. It was man's inner traits which captured his attention. For example, in the "antitheses" there is an inexorable assault on the roots of sin which are located in men's attitudes rather than a "hacking away at the branches of sin". This is reflected again in 15:11 and 18 (cf. Mk. 7:15-23). What proceeds from the mouth defiles a man, that which ultimately comes from the heart; but what is external to the heart does not defile. It is quite natural, then, to interpret vv. 25-26 to mean that if one cleansed the inside of his life, the outside would become clean as a matter of course.

The metaphorical interpretation of v. 26 is also supported by the difficulty of explaining how the contents of ἀρπάγη and ἀκρασία could apply literally in the context of a purity question for vessels.

⁷⁵ Among others, cf. Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 187; Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p. 232; J. C. Fenton, *Saint Matthew*, p. 374; A. W. Argyle, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 176; Strecker, *Der Weg*, pp. 31-32; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 494; McKenzie, "Matthew", p. 103; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 20; Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus*, p. 146; Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", pp. 292-293; Alexander Sand, *Das Gesetz*, p. 90; Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, p. 155; Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 180, n. 1; and Green, *Matthew*, p. 192. Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 442, suggests that there is a "hint" of this.

⁷⁶ Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 49.

⁷⁷ This is not as impossible for the rabbinic mind as it seems to the Western mind; cf. M. *Ohol.* 7:1.

⁷⁸ Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", pp. 49-50.

⁷⁹ Manson, *Sayings*, p. 237; cf. p. 269.

These are vices which fill the hearts of men, not cups and platters.⁸⁰ The absence of the word παρωγίς in v. 26 might further indicate that the cleansing of vessels was only a secondary concern.⁸¹ Therefore, from logic alone, it appears that the fifth woe has been applied as a polemical metaphor condemning the corrupt existence of the scribes and Pharisees.

Two additional points were raised by T. W. Manson to support a metaphorical understanding of vv. 25-26. He assumed that since vv. 27-28 draw an analogy between whitewashed tombs and the Pharisees (παρομοιάζω), this would also have been Matthew's understanding of vv. 25-26.⁸² This matter (vv. 27-28) will be taken up shortly, but Manson also appealed to the context of Luke. Since the woe has a transparently figurative meaning in Luke this should apply to Matthew as well.⁸³

However, Manson ignores the fact that Luke may have totally misunderstood the original saying.⁸⁴ Like most modern commentators, Luke considered that the saying could logically apply only to men's hearts: τὸ ἔσωθεν ὁμῶν (Mt. 23:26: τὸ ἐκτὸς αὐτοῦ) γέμει ἀρπαγῆς καὶ πονηρίας. The addition of v. 40 has nothing whatsoever to do with the original issue of the purity of vessels and also has little to do with the fact that the inside of the Pharisees is full of corruption.⁸⁵ The fact that ὁ ποιήσας (God) made the inside and the outside (of what?)⁸⁶ has no relevance to the issue as framed by

⁸⁰ Both words occur in lists of vices in Christian literature; cf. Did. 5:1-2 and Barn. 20:1-2.

⁸¹ Since αὐτοῦ occurs inexplicably in B* f¹³ 28 *al*, it appears to have been the original reading; and the fact that a large number of manuscripts include καὶ τῆς παρωγίδος in v. 26 is probably due to its insertion by copyists to bring v. 26 in agreement with v. 25.

⁸² Manson, *Sayings*, p. 237; and van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 20.

⁸³ Manson, *Sayings*, p. 237.

⁸⁴ John C. Meagher, "Die Form und Redaktionsungeschickliche Methoden: The Principle of Clumsiness and the Gospel of Mark", *JAAR*, XLIII:459-472, 1975, introduced in a provocative article what may be called, for lack of a better term, "the botch factor". He wrote: "Any *Geschichte* that declines to admit a significant component of *Ungeschick* into its calculus is, I think, insensitive about the human condition". He suggested that errors were introduced into the text through informational improvidence, formal disorder, misdirected inventiveness, and a failure to grasp the main import. It is the latter two which it seems Luke is guilty of in 11:39-41.

⁸⁵ Bultmann, *History*, pp. 131-132, proposed that the controversy in Q originally ended with the rhetorical question in Lk. 11:40 which Matthew deleted because he failed to understand it. He noted as evidence the questions in 23:17, 19, but this is certainly not grounds for assuming that 23:25 also ended with a rhetorical question.

⁸⁶ Cf. Gos. Thom., 89. This statement bears some similarity to Acts 10:15 and 11:9.

Luke: the Pharisees cleansed the outside of the cup and plate, but are themselves full of extortion and wickedness. One can imagine further astonishment on the part of the Pharisee mentioned in 11:37 as he tried to figure out what this saying could mean and why *he* was the fool when he would have readily admitted that God created both inside and outside. Luke, perplexed by the whole matter himself,⁸⁷ probably attempted to resolve the issue by offering a remedy for the predicament of the Pharisee: "give alms". Despite attempts to explain δότε ἐλεημοσύνην as a mistranslation of an Aramaic original,⁸⁸ the epigram is most likely attributable to Luke himself. It was a favorite solution and theme of Luke's (cf. 12:33; the Unjust Steward; 16:1-9; Zacchaeus, 19:8; Barnabas, Acts 5:34-37; Dorcas, 9:36; Cornelius, 10:2; Paul, 19:35, and 24:17). The conclusion is that Luke has thoroughly reworked the original saying, and his figurative interpretation should not be the standard by which to measure the intention of an original logion or of Matthew's version.

The Literal Interpretation of Matthew 23:25-26

The examination of the text turns the scale toward the literal understanding of the woe. The use of the third person plural γέμουσιν in v. 25 clearly presupposes that the cup and plate are the subject (against Luke), for Matthew is consistent in referring to the scribes and Pharisees with a second person plural verb, as with καθαρίζετε in the same verse (cf. v. 28). There is no grammatical indication from the text that Matthew considered that the verb γέμουσιν applied

⁸⁷ Goulder, *Midrash*, p. 426, stated: "... rabbinic subtlety is too recherche for Luke himself, let alone his congregation".

⁸⁸ J. Wellhausen, *Das Evangelium Lucae*, p. 61, suggested that ܠܚܝܬ, which means 'to do good' (give alms), was mistaken for ܠܚܬ, which means 'to cleanse'. Cf. Dalman, *Words*, pp. 62-63; and Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels*, p. 2. Those who considered Lk. 11:41 as a mistranslation of an Aramaic word argued this in the context of their evidence for a primitive Aramaic gospel, which may suggest that the agenda influenced the conclusion. One might ask, if Luke's variation is in fact attributable to a mistranslation of one word, why does v. 41 not parallel Mt. 23:26 more closely? The absence of "first" and "the outside also" and the inclusion of "behold, all things are clean for you" would tend to militate against this as a possibility. Dalman asked why Luke could not have arrived at his expression starting from the Greek καθάρσιον. The purification of the cup filled with plunder could only be cleansed by emptying the contents. This seems to be the most logical explanation since Luke perceived the Pharisees as "lovers of money" (16:14).

to anything other than the vessels.⁸⁹ This is clear from the use of the pronoun αὐτοῦ in v. 26 (Lk. 11:41: ὑμῶν). The text as it stands does not express interest in what the scribes and Pharisees are but in what they do. They cleanse the outside of the cup when they need to cleanse the inside first.

The perplexing injunction to clean first the inside and then the outside will become clean still remains to be solved. How can this intelligibly apply to actual utensils? It should be noted that in a different way the metaphorical interpretation of v. 26 produces no less a difficulty for those who, like Haenchen, consider the context to be final judgment. Verse 26 offers positive advice which seems rather exceptional in a woe.⁹⁰ It suggests the possibility of improvement and the procedure for such improvement.⁹¹ How can this then apply metaphorically without creating an inconsistency? The woe connotes a malediction; the content suggests improvement. Verse 26 remains a muddle.

The Palestinian Background of Matthew 23:25-26

One of the major obstacles for interpreting v. 26 literally is the lack of Palestinian clean-unclean context that would make this dictum appropriate. Schlatter suggested that the concern for the outside of the vessel would be evinced if it contained wine consecrated to God.⁹² The wine was holy and if drops should spill on the outside of the cup anyone who touched it would become ceremonially unclean. But this is hardly apt, and verse 26 remains enigmatic. Why should the inside be cleansed first?⁹³ The addition of ἡ παροψίς in v. 25 makes this explanation of the background implausible.⁹⁴ It is this

⁸⁹ Knox, *Sources*, I:98, claimed that the woe originally ended with γέμετε ἀρπάγης, and it was changed to γέμουσιν by assimilation to the γέμουσιν in v. 27. The ἐκ was subsequently added to make sense of the passage. There is no textual basis for this conjecture, and a better explanation can be found for the text as it stands.

⁹⁰ Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 434.

⁹¹ Leonhard Goppelt, "πίνω...", *TDNT*, VI:149, maintained: "Jesus shows the Pharisee the way of conversion, not by a metaphor, but more profoundly by an illustration from everyday life, the cup on his table".

⁹² Schlatter, *Matthäus*, pp. 680-681; followed by Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 49, n. 1; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 493; and Green, *Matthew*, p. 192.

⁹³ According to M. *Kel.* 25:9: "In the holy vessels an outer part and an inner part are not distinguished, nor a part by which they are held".

⁹⁴ Green, *Matthew*, p. 192, claimed that this was "conventional" but with no further explanation as to what that meant.

very lack of a plausible background that has fostered the widespread metaphorical understanding of this woe.

However, Jacob Neusner has shed light on this perplexing question by searching out a Pharisaic legal setting for the text as it stands.⁹⁵ It is well known that the Pharisees made a distinction between the inside and outside of a vessel: "In all utensils an outer and inner part are distinguished... (M. *Kel.* 25:1)".⁹⁶ This means that if one part is unclean it does not affect the status of the other.⁹⁷ Neusner began his study with the question, "How would the command to cleanse first the inside of the cup as a metaphor be apt in the context of clean-unclean?". He assumed that v. 26 was a metaphor that reflected a real dispute concerning the purity of vessels. He maintained that this also requires the assumption that some party believed that the inside did not affect the condition of the outside; and since they were autonomous, it made no difference which was cleaned first, inside or outside.⁹⁸ Through a careful form analysis of references prior to A.D. 70, Neusner detected a dispute which would have made the saying of Jesus address itself to a current issue while at the same time transforming it.

The Mishnah does not discuss how an impure inside affects the outside or vice versa. Neusner assumed from the silence of *Kelim* 25:1, 7 on this issue that no one prior to A.D. 70 took for granted that the outside was automatically made unclean when the inside became contaminated.⁹⁹ However, from Mishnah *Berakoth* 8:2 and its *gemara*, Neusner contended that the House of Hillel regarded the inner part as susceptible, and, therefore, decisive. They deemed the outer part to be always unclean.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, from the Hillelite perspective,

⁹⁵ Jacob Neusner, "'First Cleanse the Inside' 'Halakhic' Background of a Controversy-Saying", *NTS*, XXII:486-495, 1976.

⁹⁶ Cf. M. *Kel.* 25:7-8.

⁹⁷ Against Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah*, p. 640, n. 4, who commented on M. *Kel.* 25:1: "If the inner part is rendered unclean by an unclean liquid the outside becomes unclean also; but if the outer part is rendered unclean by an unclean liquid the inner part remains clean". Danby is reading into the text the Hillelite view which prevailed after A.D. 70.

⁹⁸ Neusner, "First Cleanse the Inside", p. 488.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 491.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 492-493. Neusner interpreted the point of the *gemara* to be that Rabbi Yose and the House of Shammai were concerned about unclean hands not touching the liquid on the outer part of the cup which then will make the whole cup unclean. The House of Hillel and Rabbi Meir do not take account of that possibility *even* in the case of unclean hands touching the liquid on the outside of the cup and making the whole cup unclean. Accordingly, the Hillelites regard the state of the inner part decisive, just as does the homily.

the outer part cannot affect the inner part; and they would have wholeheartedly consented to v. 26a: "Why bother to cleanse the outer part first—or at all—since it can never be clean?".¹⁰¹ The House of Shammai disagreed: "cleanse the outer part or the inner part first; they are of equal importance". From the Hillelite perspective, as Neusner has elucidated it, v. 26 would have been self-evident.¹⁰² But Neusner claimed that in disputes between the Houses prior to A.D. 70 the Shammaite rule prevailed;¹⁰³ and, consequently, the rule that the outer part was not governed by the inner would have predominated during the ministry of Jesus. Therefore, vv. 25-26 criticized current Shammaite practice,¹⁰⁴ but with a characteristic twist. The criticism, according to Neusner, turned the debate into a moral matter and exposed its true implications.¹⁰⁵

The Meaning of Matthew 23:25-26

One may assume, then, that Matthew has taken the saying over from the tradition essentially unchanged. The saying dealt with an actual debate concerning the purity of vessels and was not applied to the hearts of men. The preposition ἐκ may have, and, in this case, probably does have a causal sense. The cups are full "because of greed",¹⁰⁶ rather than full of greed. Schweizer recognized this as a possibility: the food and drink were acquired by avarice and injustice.¹⁰⁷ The woe may then be understood as addressing itself to a current issue about vessels at the time of Jesus: which was susceptible, inside or outside, or both? It sided with the Hillelite position. The

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Cf. also Asher Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth*, p. 141.

¹⁰² From Neusner's reconstruction, the original context of the debate derived from a time when the Shammaite view of the law was binding; the saying is used by Matthew at a time when the Hillelites were gaining predominance. The saying, however, has no application to them, and either the evangelist did not know, or did not care what their position was. It seems, then, that Matthew is faithfully passing on the tradition rather than engaging in serious dialogue with the "synagogue across the street" by attacking their practices. Cf. J. Massyngberde Ford's review of W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, in *Bib*, XLVIII:623-628, 1967.

¹⁰³ Cf. Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70*, II:1-5.

¹⁰⁴ Neusner, "First Cleanse the Inside", p. 494.

Finkel, *The Pharisees*, p. 136, asserted: "The controversial halachoth which are found in the list of 'woes' apply only to the Pharisaic Shammaites".

¹⁰⁵ Neusner believed that vv. 25-26 had a metaphorical application for the evangelist.

¹⁰⁶ Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, III:260. Cf. also McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 336; Filson, *Matthew*, p. 247; and Hill, *Matthew*, p. 313.

¹⁰⁷ Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 442.

inside is most important. But then it drew attention to the fact that the vessels were filled with food and drink¹⁰⁸ which was obtained unjustly and consumed intemperately—a circumstance which cultic washing could not cleanse¹⁰⁹—and ultimately made the entire issue moot.

Trilling, although he believed the original meaning had been distorted,¹¹⁰ offered some insight from a redactional standpoint which complements the above interpretation. According to him, the evangelist understood v. 25 quite literally, but in connection with the preceding distinction between weighty and light in vv. 23-24 and in connection with the distinction between inner and outer in 15:20.¹¹¹ The point was that the Pharisees failed to distinguish the difference between the weighty and light commands of the Torah, between moral and levitical purity. In light of the Palestinian context prior to A.D. 70, there is an implicit attack on the casuistry of the Pharisaic teachers who devote such meticulous concern for ceremonial matters that lead to levitical purity while they manifest a gross negligence in matters of moral purity.¹¹² They have neglected the primary commands of the Mosaic law, particularly the love for neighbor. The vessels may be ritually pure, but they contain food and drink which were morally impure because they were the harvest of greed and injustice.¹¹³ The woe reduces their scrupulosity with cups to an absurdity. Ultimately, then, the interpretation derived from a metaphorical understanding of vv. 25-26 is not incorrect. It does imply that the inner disposition that leads to the plundering of neighbors (ignoring justice and mercy) must be cleansed before the external trappings of piety will have any significance before God. It must, however, be recognized that the woe attacks the scribes and Pharisees according to their failure as teachers. As the guides of God's people they are blind (Φαρισαῖε τυφλοί); they do not know God's will nor τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου. Their hypocrisy is not that they simply pretend to be pure

¹⁰⁸ Manson's illustration, *Sayings*, p. 238, that the cups were filled with poison, is misleading.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 442; and Schulz, *Q*, p. 98.

¹¹⁰ Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 201. With most scholars he saw a discontinuity in thought between v. 25 and v. 26.

¹¹¹ Ibid.; cf. Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 187.

¹¹² Paul Gaechter, *Das Matthäus Evangelium*, p. 742, picked up an idea expressed earlier by Wellhausen that τοῦ ποτηρίου and τοῦ παρωσίδος were explanatory genitives meaning "the external, the cup". But this is unlikely; cf. McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 336.

¹¹³ Cf. Amos 2:6-8.

while actually being full of robbery and extortion; rather, they have failed in their responsibility to make clear the will of God. Their unrighteous loot condemns them; they have ignored the primary commandments and have taught as primary that which was secondary. They have focused on the outer/inner parts of utensils while the law really refers to people and moral character.¹¹⁴ Once again, the scribes and Pharisees have been shown up as failures in their assigned task of interpreting the law.

MATTHEW 23:27-28

It is common knowledge that the graves were marked on the fifteenth of Adar in order to warn pilgrims, particularly priests, against imminent defilement from inadvertent contact with a grave.¹¹⁵ Two woes in Matthew and Luke seem to relate to this practice, although from such different perspectives that it may seem doubtful that the evangelists have consulted a common source. In Luke 11:44, the Pharisees are compared to invisible graves (ἐστὲ ὡς τὰ μνημεῖα τὰ ἄδηλα). In Matthew 23:27, the scribes and Pharisees are like whited sepulchres (παρομοιάζετε τάφοις κεκονιαμένοις). Luke infers that men walk over these unseen graves and unwittingly (οὐκ οἶδασιν) become defiled. Matthew observes that the sepulchres outwardly appear beautiful (οἷτινες ἔξωθεν μὲν φαίνονται ὡραῖοι) but inwardly contain a source of defilement. The implication in Luke's version is that the Pharisees convey defilement just as the corpse does; but it is imperceptible to men and, thus, the absence of proper markings is satirized. A pilgrim might traverse what looks, innocently enough, like an ordinary open field without realizing that the bones of the dead lie ploughed beneath his feet. The details of Luke's woes are

¹¹⁴ Neusner, "'First Cleanse the Inside'", p. 494, concluded:

The Pharisees' interest in purity laws was therefore made into a polemic against them. They do not understand the true meaning of the law, therefore debate among themselves 'outer/inner' of *utensils*, while the law really refers to *people* and their moral character.

¹¹⁵ The corpse was a father of uncleanness, cf. Num. 19:13-22 and M. Kel. 1:4. Concerning the marking of graves, cf. M. Shek. 1:1, T. Shek. 1:4, M. M.Kat. 1:2, M. M.Sh. 5:1, B. M.Kat. 1a, 5a. The fear of contacting impurity during the Passover season is portrayed in Jn. 11:55 and 18:28.

both logical and appropriate in a Palestinian context.¹¹⁶ The woe itself attacks the deceptive appearances of the Pharisees which ensnare unsuspecting men, and this neatly parallels the warning in 12:1 to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is their hypocrisy.

Matthew seems to be dealing with the same phenomenon of marking grave areas and graves in v. 27, but from a different angle—the graves are marked. As most interpret it, v. 27 notes the presence of the danger warning on the grave while specifically contrasting the apparent beauty of the outside with the ugliness inside. This has been widely understood to mean that the Pharisees pretend to be the paragons of piety while deep down they are a mass of impurity. Their imposing rectitude masks the wickedness interred within.¹¹⁷ Therefore, the charge of hypocrisy, viewed as a radical disparity between external appearance and underlying reality, finally seems appropriate to the contents of the woe. The woe no longer attacks the scribal exegesis of the Law, but the very existence of the scribes and Pharisees.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Cf. M. *Ohol.* 17:1-5. G. Schwarz, “‘Unkenntliche Gräber?’ (Lukas xi. 44)”, *NTS*, XXIII:345-346, 1977, has argued the converse. He claimed that only Matthew preserved the original logion because of the allusion to the annual spring whitewashing of the tombs and that Luke completely misinterpreted the tradition. He attributed the variation between the two gospels to Luke’s mistranslation of an Aramaic *Grundtext*. Schwarz argued that since παρομοιάζετε and ἐστε ὡς and τάφοις and τὰ μνημεῖα are synonymous this would suggest that a fixed text was underlying the Matthean and Lucan “translations”. However, the terms κεκοιμημένος and τὰ ὀδῆλα are incompatible. He explained the divergence by postulating that the Aramaic was ܡܬܪܝܬܐ, which in the dual perfect passive can mean either “hidden, undiscernible” (as in Luke) or “painted, whitewashed” (as in Matthew). Schwarz reasoned that Luke mistranslated the supposed Aramaic original the way he did because he was unaware of the Jewish practice of marking graves before the Passover season and this lack of information led also to the erroneous amplification that men would walk over “unseen graves” unknowingly. Schwarz also argued that the metaphor was inappropriate because the Pharisees would not have been “overlooked” with their ostentatious piety (cf. Lk. 18:9-14).

All of this seems to miss the point. There is no need to resort to an Aramaic *Grundtext* to explain away the Lucan features—they are appropriate for a Palestinian context. The rabbis expressed genuine concern that one might traverse a field with unknown graves and become defiled unwittingly (cf. M. *Ohol.* 17-18). Also, the ostentatious piety of the Pharisees is not visualized; rather, it is the deceptive appearance of salubrity that they convey to unsuspecting people which is satirized. The metaphor of an open field with a hidden grave that defiles the unwary traveler is therefore apposite.

¹¹⁷ Cf. McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 337; Schlatter, *Matthäus*, pp. 682-683; Manson, *Sayings*, p. 237; Haenchen, “Matthäus 23”, p. 20; Filson, *Matthew*, p. 247; Fenton, *Matthew*, p. 374; Stagg, “Matthew”, p. 214; Hill, *Matthew*, p. 313; and Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 442.

¹¹⁸ Schulz, *Q*, p. 106.

It is not concerned with what they do but with what they are (παρομοιάζεστε).

But, so interpreted, the woe is illogical. As McNeile noted, "white washing" is not a good simile for hypocrisy because its purpose is to advertise rather than to conceal corruption.¹¹⁹ If someone saw a "whitewashed tomb" he would go out of his way to keep a safe distance from that vicinity. If the metaphor is rigorously applied, the scribes and Pharisees, as "whitewashed tombs", would have been studiously avoided by the people who would recognize the danger of their inner squalor. Possibly Matthew adapted v. 27 in accordance with the theme of the preceding woe contrasting τὸ ἔξωθεν with the τὸ ἔσωθεν at the expense of logic because he did not care or perhaps did not know that it was illogical.¹²⁰ The locus of the problem of logic lies with the words κεκονιαμένοις and ὥραῖοι, and this problem must be clarified before Matthew's intention can be fully understood.

The Relationship of ὥραῖος to the Meaning

It is rather curious that many commentators have accepted the assumption, without any substantiation, that one of the secondary results of whitewashing the tombs was their attractiveness in the bright sun.¹²¹ This sounds reasonable, but there is no evidence that this was indeed the effect, or that even if they did appear bright they would have been considered beautiful. According to one Rabbi: "A field of graves used to be marked with lime the sign having the color of white, like corpses" (B. B.K. 69a). This might indicate the real psychological effect of whitewashing; it did not evoke a sensation of beauty, but rather, would have evoked repulsion. However, there are more far-reaching problems. The quotation refers to a sign being marked rather than a grave. According to Jacob Mann, there is no hint that tombs, most of which were caves with "rolling stones",

¹¹⁹ Cf. McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 337; Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism*, II: 29-30.

¹²⁰ So Green, *Matthew*, p. 192.

¹²¹ Cf. Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 187; Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p. 232; Sherman Johnson, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew", *IB*, VII:537; Filson, *Matthew*, p. 247; Argyle, *Matthew*, p. 176; Fenton, *Matthew*, p. 375; Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 146; and Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 342.

were ever whitewashed.¹²² Tombs would be easily recognizable and would not need to be whitewashed. According to a *baraita*, markings were not made in the case of certainty:

Our rabbis taught: "No markings are made to indicate [the presence of] a piece of flesh [from a corpse] no larger than an olive, nor of [human] bone no larger than a barley-corn, nor of any [human] remains which do not diffuse defilement under 'tent'. But markings are made to indicate [the presence of] a [human] spine, a skull or the major members of a skeleton or the major number of lesser bones thereof. And the markings are not made in cases of certainty but [only] in cases of uncertainty" (B. *M.Kat.* 5b).

Signs were put up, as one might have assumed, only near doubtful graves (a field where a grave has been lost or ploughed under, or where there were tomb niches; cf. B. *M.Kat.* 5b).¹²³ That they were referring to signs, not the stones, even in the case of tomb niches is indicated by the statement: "Nor is the marking placed far away from the spot, in order to avoid the wasting of any space of the land of Israel" (B. *M.Kat.* 5b). It is, therefore, doubtful that the stone (Heb. גִּלְל) rolled against the aperture of a grave was whitewashed.¹²⁴ That it would have been considered beautiful is even more doubtful. But signs marking the grave areas are certainly not in view in Matthew 23:27. Does 23:27, then, reflect a palpable ignorance of the practice of marking graves?

Without recognizing the above difficulties, commentators have still sensed the problems inherent in v. 27. It has been suggested that

¹²² Jacob Mann, "Rabbinic Studies in the Synoptic Gospels", *HUCA*, I:352, 1924. It should be noted that the passages cited from the Mishnah by commentators as referring to the practice of whitewashing graves are misinterpreted (cf. M. *Shek.* 1:1; M. *Kat.* 1:2). The phrase *וּמַצִּינִין אֶת־הַקְּבֻרֹת* is correctly translated by Danby, "mark the graves". But *מַצִּינִין* means to make a heap of stones, mark, and especially, the mark put up to indicate the neighborhood of an unclean place, according to Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, II:1275; cf. Jacob Levy, *Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim*, IV:184. The word *ziyyun* is used for the mnemonic signs for the Torah (B. *Erub.* 54b), and for marking a vineyard (M. *M.Sh.* 5:1; B. *B.K.* 69a). There is no hint of whitewashing; but, more likely, this refers to signs placed near doubtful graves. Mann, apparently overlooked M. *M.Sh.* 5:1, however, which is the only reference that I found to "whitewashing": *וְשׁוּפָד וְשֵׁל קְבֻרֹת בְּסִיד וְטַחָה וְשׁוּפָד* ("and a grave by whiting mingled with water and poured over the grave").

¹²³ Cf. Danby, *Mishnah*, App. IV., p. 803.

¹²⁴ R. Lachish (ca. 250), according to B. *B.K.* 58a, B. *M.* 85b, marked only the graves of rabbis, not all the graves, so that righteous men would not become instruments of uncleanness.

οἵτινες ... ὥρατοι was a later gloss by someone who mistakenly thought that the purpose of the lime was to beautify, or perhaps Matthew himself was unacquainted with its purpose.¹²⁵ Allen suggested that ὥρατος, which connotes an esthetic result, was a poor translation of a more colorless Aramaic word.¹²⁶ He did not suggest what word this might be, so this remains at the level of conjecture. McNeile has noted, however, that even if the phrase were a gloss, or, it might be added, a mistranslation, the whitewashed grave still stands as a poor simile for the deception of hypocrisy.¹²⁷ It is, therefore, questionable whether the term ὥρατος is indeed the problem in v. 27; for, in fact, a parallel to this simile occurs in the Armenian version of the Story of Ahikar 2:2:¹²⁸

Son raise not up thine eyes to look on a lovely woman, rouged and antimonied. Desire her not in thy heart... For she is like unto a sepulchre which is fair on the upper and below is full of the rottenness and bones of the dead.

This provides evidence that the simile would not have been unknown at the time of Jesus¹²⁹ and that the essential element in the simile is the contrast between external beauty and internal ugliness just as in v. 27.¹³⁰ Consequently, what is problematic in v. 27 is the relationship of the whitewashing to this beauty.

The Relationship of Κοινῶν to the Meaning

Manson suggested that κεκοινωμένος was a "mistaken antiquarianism" supplied either by Matthew or an earlier hand. He thought that the original simile had "nothing to do with whitewashing of tombs, but rather with the fact that the sepulchres of famous or wealthy persons were often elaborately built and carved".¹³¹ In light

¹²⁵ The adjective is notably absent in Syr^s. Perhaps Matthew, in an attempt to make a more marked contrast, mistakenly stressed the external beauty. R. Judah complained: "Not all are well-versed on the subject [of proper markings]" (B. *M. Kat.* 5b).

¹²⁶ W. C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, p. 349.

¹²⁷ McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 337.

¹²⁸ According to R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, II:721, the Armenian version represents a good text.

¹²⁹ It is highly unlikely that this simile would have been influenced by Mt. 23:27. The context is different, referring to the universal problem of beauty that is only skin deep. The contrast is not inside/outside, but upper/below; and the sepulchre is not whitewashed.

¹³⁰ Mann, "Rabbinic Studies", p. 353; and McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 337.

¹³¹ Manson, *Sayings*, p. 237.

of the Story of Aḥikar 2:2 and the reference in 23:29 to the building of the tombs (τάφοι) of the prophets and the adorning of the memorials (μνημεῖα) of the righteous, Manson may be correct. The beauty of the tombs has nothing to do with the markings, but with its elaborate structure. There is no discernible distinction between τάφος and μνημεῖον in Matthew's gospel. They are essentially synonymous, and their differentiation is not always clear in the usage of the literature of the time.¹³² This is the conclusion of Jacob Mann: "By 'sepulchres' (τάφοις) Matthew apparently meant the monuments (μνημεῖα) that used to be erected over tombs".¹³³ These monuments are normally pure, except those which are whitewashed. Mann cited Tosefta *Oholoth* 17:4: "The presumption of tomb-markers (מחשתי) which are in the Land of Israel is that they are clean, except for those that are marked-off".¹³⁴ The illogical elements of v. 27 are thus resolved if the simile has in view elaborate memorials which were indeed considered to be impressive, and, though normally pure and

¹³² Τάφος primarily meant burial ground, while μνημεῖον and μνήμα meant the actual grave or monument; cf. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, pp. 526, 718; Otto Michel, "μνησκομαι...", *TDNT*, IV:681. In Josephus, μνημεῖον is usually used in reference to a memorial, but τάφος may also be used in this way. Eleazar, the high priest, had a μνημεῖον αὐτοῦ καὶ τάφος in the city of Gagatha (*Ant.* V:119). Herod attempted to loot the tomb (τάφος) of David (cf. Acts 2:29) and built a propitiatory monument (μνήμα λευκῆς πέτρας) at the mouth of the tomb when this effort was supernaturally thwarted. I Macc. 13:27-30 refers to the memorial or mausoleum which Simon built for his father and brothers over their tomb (τάφος) which could be seen far and wide. There are several references to monuments in the *Jewish Wars*: Herod's monuments (*Bell.* V:108), the monuments of John the High Priest and King Alexander (Jannaeus) (*Bell.* V:55, 119, 147), and Helena's monument, apparently a well known landmark near Jerusalem (*Ant.* XX:95). Josephus also refers to the tombs (μνημεῖα) of Abraham and his family in Hebron which were of fine marble and exquisite workmanship.

Tomb monuments were also mentioned in Rabbinic literature. According to R. Nathan (ca. 165-200), surplus money collected to bury someone is used to build a monument over his grave (cf. Gen.R. 82:10; J. *Shek.* 47a; B. *Sanh.* 48a). According to M. *Erub.* 5:1, tomb monuments sometimes contained dwelling chambers, apparently for guards.

¹³³ Mann, "Rabbinic Studies", p. 353.

¹³⁴ The translation is taken from Jacob Neusner, *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Purities*, pt. IV:324. He commented that this passage tells us that bodies in a grave area which has been ploughed will not remain under the markers, and the corpses will be removed in time. However, "tombmarkers" translates מַחֲשֵׁתִי which would refer to memorials.

According to M. *Ohol.* 7:1, the sides of a solid tomb-monument remain clean since the uncleanness cleaves upward and downward, unless the uncleanness is within one cubic handbreadth of the side. The case presumes a monument built upon a sealed grave and is based on the principle of a wall serving all the rooms. Cf. Neusner, *History*, IV:174f.

unmarked, were marked in cases where the memorials were built over a sealed grave and the principle of the "common wall" prevailed.

The simile in v. 27 does correspond to a Palestinian context, but the addition of *κεκοσμιμένους* is an unessential element. Perhaps it is included to stress that the memorial exuded uncleanness, but it is not related to the beauty of the tombs.¹³⁵ It is significant that the prevention of corpse defilement was distinctly a Pharisaic preoccupation;¹³⁶ and some debate was stirred by the question: "Where is an indication in the Torah that gravesites should be marked?". The answers, although late, offer valuable insight into the rabbinic conception of the significance of marking graves. The conclusion was

¹³⁵ McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 337, suggested that *κεκοσμιμένους* referred to ornamental plastering of the graves (cf. Deut. 27:2, 4; Josephus, *Ant.* IV:200; Prov. 21:9 LXX; Dan. 5:5). Acts 23:3, "whitewashed wall", refers to Ezek. 13:10ff. and 22:28, not to Mt. 23:27, as does also CD 8:12-18. Cf. Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, pp. 167-168, for the best explanation of this image.

There is no connection between Mt. 23:27 and Acts 23:3, and there is no evidence for the external decorative whitewashing of tombs. It is possible that niches were "whitewashed" inside the tomb (cf. S. Krauss, "Tombs", *Jewish Encyclopedia*, XXI:186), but this completely ruins the metaphor in Mt. 23:27. Therefore, this writer believes McNeile's suggestion is not correct.

Along similar lines, Samuel Tobias Lachs, "On Matthew 23:27-28", *HTR*, LXVIII: 385-388, 1975, offered an ingenious explanation of *κεκοσμιμένους*. Lachs recognized that the basic difficulty in 23:27 is: what kind of *τάφος* would have been whitened on the outside for the purpose of beautification? Lachs' solution began with the ambiguity of *τάφος*, which he suggested should apply in this case to "whitened urns or ossuaries". He also argued that the *κομία* did not refer to the marking of grave-sites but to the common practice of mixing powdered marble and lime and applying it to structures, primarily limestone, in order to fill in the porous surfaces so that decorations may be added or so that the resulting sheen would affect grandeur. Lachs connected his interpretation of the "whitened ossuary" to an incident concerning Rabban Gamaliel in *B. Ber.* 28a where Lachs saw a relationship between the imagery of hypocrisy and a reference to "whitened urns or casks".

Lachs' reference to the practice of plastering of structures to give them a "rich look" seems to be the best solution to explain the beauty of the tomb, but we prefer to interpret the beauty as deriving from the structure itself and the reference to *κεκοσμιμένους* as an additional detail unrelated to the beauty.

Another explanation of 23:27 was proposed by Israel Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism*, II:30. He speculated that there was a play on the words *קבר* (sepulchre) and *קרב* (inward part) in Ps. 5:10; and, therefore, the grave is related to hypocrisy. This interpretation was also shared by J. Duncan M. Derrett, related in a private correspondence. He picked up on the term *קבר פתוח* (open sepulchre), which could easily produce a paronomasia since *פתח* means "to dig, scratch, hence engrave and decorate". It is found to mean decorated work, and could be used to suggest painting which would allude to the whitewashing. This interpretation is, again, ingenious but remains only a possibility.

¹³⁶ Cf. *B. B.K.* 58a; *B. B.M.* 85b.

that Ezekiel 39:15 provided the textual basis for the marking of graves, but it was first learned as an oral tradition:

Abaye said [that the rule] may be derived from here: "And put not a stumbling block before the blind" (Lev. 19:4). R. Papa said: "And he will say, cast ye up, cast ye up, clear the way" (Isa. 57:14). R. Hinena suggested, "Take up the stumbling-block out of the way of My people" (Isa. 57:14). R. Joshua, the son of R. Idi, said: "And thou shalt show them the way wherein they must walk" (Exod. 18:20). Mar. Zutra said: "And ye shall separate the Children of Israel from their uncleanness" (Lev. 15:31). R. Ashi said: "And they shall have charge of My charge" (Lev. 22:9), [which implies] make safeguards to My charge. Rabina said: "And to him who ordereth his way will I show the salvation of God" (Ps. 50:23).¹³⁷

This debate reveals a basic assumption that the marking of graves was looked upon in terms of the task of guiding Israel in the paths of righteousness—in this case, literally. It is recognized that this debate stems from a much later period, but it does not seem unreasonable to assume that the Pharisees in the first century would have resonated with this basic assumption about the significance of marking the graves. This was part and parcel of their task as guardians of the Torah who attempted to actualize temple purity in every day life. The addition of *κεκοινάμενος* is unessential for the point of the simile, but its presence adds a twist (attributable to Jesus) which gibes at Pharisaic practice. The scribes and Pharisees are just as much a father of uncleanness as the graves they so carefully mark out for people to avoid.

An allusion to the clothing of the scribes may have prompted the sarcasm. Krauss noted that the scribes and their pupils wore white linen clothes, which was both a sign of purity and a mark of distinction. Men of eminence or men who wished to flaunt their position wore white.¹³⁸ The white garments worn by the scribes may have evoked the ironic parallel to "whitened tombs".

This woe once again is related to Pharisaic failure in the stewardship of the Law, although it, more than any of the other woes, also attacks the inner existence of the Pharisees.

¹³⁷ B. *M.Kat.* 5a; cf. Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I:936-937.

¹³⁸ Samuel Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie*, I:145, 550, n. 212. Cf. B. *Kidd.* 72a; *Shab.* 25b; and *Ned.* 20b. Cf. also Josephus, *Bell.* II:123.

The Meaning of Matthew 23:28

The conclusion of the sixth woe is more than likely a Matthean summary¹³⁹ and, therefore, is important as Matthew's own elucidation of the simile in v. 27 and probably of the previous woes as well. Matthew frequently used οὕτως to introduce his own explanation of a parable or a figure of speech.¹⁴⁰

In light of the development of the interpretation of the woes, the occurrence of ἀνομία in v. 28 is significant. In the LXX, ἀνομία is a rather colorless word which connotes sin in a general sense without any specific connection to the Law except as sin, by definition, is a breaking of God's commandments.¹⁴¹ This same general connotation of ἀνομία is true of its usage in the New Testament as well.¹⁴² However, since the woes were directed against the scribes and Pharisees who were exceedingly zealous for the Law and who have been specifically recognized in 23:2 as sitting on the seat of Moses, it is not improbable that ἀνομία in 23:28 has a stronger correlation to the transgression of *the* Law.¹⁴³ If this is true, then it must be recognized that even in this text the opposition between

¹³⁹ So Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 50; Knox, *Sources*, I:97; Heinrichs, *Komposition*, p. 52f., according to Schulz, *Q*, p. 105, n. 81; G. Barth, *Tradition*, p. 62; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 201; Beilner, *Christus und die Pharisäer*, p. 221; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 494; Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p. 744; Ulrich Wilckens, "ὑποκρίνομαι...", *TDNT*, VIII:567, n. 46; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp. 20-21; Schulz, *Q*, pp. 105-106; Sand, *Das Gesetz*, p. 96, n. 316; Goulder, *Midrash*, p. 427; and Green, *Matthew*, p. 192. McNeile, *Matthew*, pp. 337-338, and Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 435, note it as a possibility.

In summary, the evidence for assuming the Matthean creation of 23:28 is the presence of: 1) οὕτως (Mt. 32/Mk. 10/Lk. 21) which is frequent in Matthew when figures of speech or parables are explicated; 2) φαίνομαι (Mt. 14/Mk. 1/Lk. 2), the phrase φαίνεσθε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις occurs in Mt. 6:5, 16, 18; 3) δίκαιος (Mt. 18 [27:4]/Mk. 2/Lk. 11); 4) ἀνομία (Mt. 4/Mk. —/Lk. —); 5) the repetition of ἔσωθεν—ἔξωθεν. On the basis of the lack of a Lucan parallel and the cumulative weight of so many distinctively Matthean words appearing in one verse, it seems safe to conclude that v. 28 is a Matthean formulation.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Mt. 18:14, 35; 20:16; and Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 293.

¹⁴¹ Cf. W. Gutbrod, "νόμος...", *TDNT*, IV:1085.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 1085-1086.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 1086, against Davies, *Setting*, p. 205. Davies concluded: "For Matthew the term does not seem, primarily at least, to have reference to the Jewish Law. It may, indeed be devoid of any 'legal' connotation and merely signifies sin in a general sense. It may be that the use of the term indicates that Matthew regards such sin as a breaking of a law—not the Jewish law—but the Law which is God's will revealed in the words of Jesus". However, Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, p. 140, noted: "Jesus' pattern was to set before the opponents the basic requirements of the Law which for all their exceeding zealousness they failed to observe".

outward appearance and inward reality is not the only concern,¹⁴⁴ and v. 28 is grandly ironic—the architects of the fence around the Law were themselves lawless.¹⁴⁵

There is no indication that the scribes and Pharisees pretended to be righteous while inwardly contriving wickedness. Each woe to this point has condemned a sincere if overscrupulous attention to the matters of the oral Law which was considered to be on the same footing as the written Torah. But as these leaders attempted to actualize the obedience to the Law, they actually failed to distinguish the weightier things in the Law because they saw no distinction in any of the commands.¹⁴⁶ From men's perspective they appear righteous (cf. 9:13), but from God's perspective they stand in opposition to his will. Bultmann wrote that Jesus attacked "*legalistic ritualism* which strives for an external correctness which can go hand in hand with an impure will".¹⁴⁷ The scribes and Pharisees are accused of teaching a legalistic ritualism that distorted God's intention in the Law. Their myopia caused them and the people to misjudge the son of God as well as to misconceive the great commandments of the Law. It is this which Jesus decried and which Matthew passes on as an explanation for Israel's grievous failure.

CONCLUSION

It is not denied that Matthew considered the Pharisees to be guilty of self-absorbed motivation in some of their legislative concerns; the Pharisees cannot teach what is good because they are evil (12:33-37). But the first six woes are not just an attack on the ethical contradiction of actual hypocrites among the Pharisees; it is an attack on the understanding of the Law which is wrong in basic principle.¹⁴⁸ All of Israel is implicated (23:37; 27:25), but the "enlightened" clergy are those who are most responsible. Their failure was not just a matter of ethical bankruptcy; it was a fatal distortion of the Law's

¹⁴⁴ van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 22. In his discussion of antinomianism in Matthew, G. Barth, *Tradition*, nowhere deals with 23:28, which clearly applies to Jewish leaders, not antinomians. Cf. Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 137, n. 4; Davies, *Setting*, p. 205; Walker, *Heilsgeschichte*, p. 135; and Alexander Sand, "Die Polemik gegen 'Gesetzlosigkeit' im Evangelium nach Matthäus und bei Paulus", *BZ*, XIV:112-125, 1970.

¹⁴⁵ This parallels the criticism of the Pharisees in CD 1:13-18 and also Asmp. M. 7:2.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. n. 50, above.

¹⁴⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, *New Testament Theology*, I:17.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Krister Stendahl, "Matthew", *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 792.

intention and a callous insensitivity to the message of the Prophets. The Law and the Prophets prophesied the coming of Jesus (11:13). Jesus came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets (5:17), but the Jewish leaders are portrayed by Matthew as adamantly refusing to acknowledge this. From Matthew's perspective this constituted their basic failure which is delineated in the first woe: "You shut the kingdom of heaven to men; you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to enter".¹⁴⁹ The woes which follow reflect, with some degree of accuracy, Jesus' clash with the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law, even though the original life settings have been lost when the individual logia were combined into an artificial framework as a series of woes. Matthew has correctly understood the woe tradition as attacks on the failure of the religious professionals (23:2-3) for the dereliction of their responsibility to expound correctly the will of God. This, in turn, hastened the judgment of God on the nation that had no faith, that had broken his covenant commandments, killed his prophets, crucified his son, and persecuted his son's messengers. In this way, Matthew sets forth one of his explanations for Israel's perplexing hardness: the leaders did not understand the Law and were themselves lawless.

However, these woes do not only have in view the condemnation of particular Pharisaic foibles; they apply as warnings to the Christian "scribe", who was the antithesis of the Jewish leader. The scribal mantle has been transferred to the leaders of the church. This is clear from two Matthean passages. After Jesus accused the Pharisees indirectly of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit because they had refused to acknowledge the Spirit's imprimatur on Jesus' ministry (12:22-32), his denunciation continued with observations about a tree and its fruit. In 12:34-37 the charge continued:

³⁴γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, πῶς δύνασθε ἀγαθὰ λαλεῖν πονηροὶ ὄντες; ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ περισσεύματος τῆς καρδίας τὸ στόμα λαλεῖ. ³⁵ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ ἐκβάλλει ἀγαθὰ, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ θησαυροῦ ἐκβάλλει πονηρά. ³⁶λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶν ῥῆμα ἀργὸν ὃ λαλήσουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀποδώσουσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως. ³⁷ἐκ γὰρ τῶν λόγων σου δικαιοθήσῃ, καὶ ἐκ τῶν λόγων σου καταδικασθήσῃ.

¹⁴⁹ Gutbrod, "νόμος", p. 1061, correctly perceived that the scribes and Pharisees are accused of closing the kingdom of heaven because "they will allow men to enter only by fulfillment of the Law which they themselves administer".

The treasure metaphor is more than simply a reference to "good" or "bad" hearts, because it is completed by the statement that men will be judged by their words and held accountable for their "careless words". From the context, the teaching of the Pharisees (12:24) is being condemned as well as their existence—their treasure is bad. That "treasure" should be taken as a metaphor for teaching or interpretation rather than existence is confirmed by 13:52. In contrast to the Pharisee, every Christian scribe μαθητευθείς τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν draws out old and new from *his treasure*. The treasure of the Christian scribe is good; but should he become false, the initial woe (23:13) applies to him as well, for the disciples have been given the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (13:11).¹⁵⁰

Another indication that the teaching office had been transferred from the Pharisees to the Christian teacher is to be found in chap. 16. The teaching of the Pharisees (and the Sadducees) is specifically condemned as infectious leaven in 16:1-12. This makes the bestowal of the keys of the kingdom of heaven to bind and to loose¹⁵¹ which immediately follows (16:19) even more significant. It is clear that Peter as the prototype of the disciple has supplanted the scribes and Pharisees in the teaching and administering office. Matthew understands the leaders of the church to have the same authority as Peter (18:18). Consequently, when the condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees for shutting off access to the kingdom (23:13) is read, it must be kept in mind that Matthew conceived the Christian leader as the one who now controlled the entrance to the kingdom of heaven. The disciples are, therefore, to seek first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness (6:33), which exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20). They are to do the will of the Father in order to enter the kingdom themselves (7:21) and to produce the fruits of the kingdom (21:43). They are also to teach all things that Jesus has

¹⁵⁰ The disciples are also to make "proselytes", disciples to Christ (10:5ff.; 28:19-20); they are not to make oaths (5:33-37); they are to love mercy and be faithful (5:7; 18:23-35); they are to hunger and thirst after righteousness and love their neighbor (5:6, 43-47; 22:37-39); and they are to avoid hypocrisy and lawlessness.

¹⁵¹ According to Josephus, *Bell.* I:111, the Pharisees bound and loosed men. This writer concurs with Schweizer's opinion, *Matthew*, p. 343, that 16:19 deals "mostly with teaching authority", against Friedrich Büchsel, for example, "δέω (λύω)", *TDNT*, II:60. Regardless of what the saying might refer to, it is clear that the responsibility for the stewardship of kingdom matters has passed to the leaders of the church. Certainly, Isa. 22:22 provides the background where Eliakim was made steward in the place of Shebna who had proven unworthy of the office and was cast out.

commanded them (28:20); and whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments, and *teaches* men such, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven (5:19). The scribes and Pharisees defaulted at each of these crucial points. Their day has passed as far as playing any role in the economy of salvation history. The scribal mantle has been passed on to Christian scribes who face the same dangers. The defalcation of responsibility vividly portrayed by Matthew as the ultimate undoing of the Jewish leaders and their nation remains as a possibility for Christians.¹⁵² The leaders of the church should thus take heed lest the same fate befall them and those in their charge as befell Israel.

¹⁵² Cf. 7:15-23; 13:36-43, 47-50; 18:6; 24:45-51. Cf. Charles W. F. Smith, "The Mixed State of the Church in Matthew's Gospel", *JBL*, LXXXII:149-168, 1963; and Eduard Schweizer, "Observance of the Law and Charismatic Activity in Matthew", *NTS*, XVI: 213-230, 1969-1970.

CHAPTER SIX

MATTHEW 23:29-39

This chapter attempts to understand the intention of Matthew in the concluding verses of chap. 23. Many studies have been done on the *traditionsgeschichtliche* problems in these last verses;¹ however, this chapter will focus upon the text as it stands, which reflects a number of redactional changes by Matthew that offer clues for interpreting Matthew's objectives.²

MATTHEW 23:29-31

As was the case in some of the other woes, the meaning of the seventh woe in Matthew is clouded by what seems to be tortuous logic. The parallel woe in Matthew and Luke 11:47 contains a reproach for the building of the tombs (Mt., τάφος; Lk., μνῆμα) of the prophets. There was indeed a "tomb renaissance" which was apparently a phenomenon imported from hellenistic culture and perhaps initiated by the great builder, Herod, himself.³ Derrett ascribed the basic motivation for this activity to be conspicuous consumption,⁴ but some evidence exists that it was or became associated with a desire to atone for innocent blood.⁵ This is most obvious in Josephus' account of Herod's abortive raid on David's tomb (*Ant.* XVI:182) which led the unnerved king to construct an ἱλαστήριον μνῆμα to prevent further catastrophe. It is unlikely that the scribes or the Pharisees would have endorsed superstitions about the expiatory significance of tombs. Derrett, however, went too far in citing isolated

¹ Cf. Odil Hannes Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des Deuteronomischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum*; Felix Christ, *Jesus Sophia. Die Sophia-Christologie bei den Synoptikern*; M. Jack Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology, and Law in Matthew's Gospel*; and Siegfried Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten*.

² Luke 11:47ff. can serve as a measure of literary control, so Steck, *Israel*, p. 29; and Suggs, *Wisdom*, p. 33.

³ Joachim Jeremias, *Heiligengräber in Jesu Umwelt*, pp. 118-121.

⁴ J. Duncan M. Derrett, "'You build the tombs of the Prophets' (Lk. 11, 47-51, Mt. 23, 29-31)", *StEv*, IV:188 (TU, 102), 1968.

⁵ Cf. Jeremias, *Heiligengräber*, p. 121; and H. A. Fischel, "Martyr and Prophet (A Study in Jewish Literature)", *JQR*, XXXVII:374.

evidence that, he claimed, proved that the erection of elaborate tombs was forbidden by Pharisees.⁶ The evidence is late and is clearly a reaction to excesses. The graves of the prophets were honored, and the idea that praying at these graves had a miraculous efficacy may have germinated as a result.⁷ There is evidence in the Talmud (B. *Yom.* 87a, B. *Hag.* 22b) of someone going to a grave (not that of a prophet) to pray for forgiveness for wrongs done against the dead; but this was done with complete sincerity, and no elaborate adornment of the grave was mentioned. Perhaps it is misleading, then, to understand this woe literally as referring to the actual building of the tombs of the prophets.

Certainly, if the woe in Luke 11:47-48 is taken literally, the logic is strained: "You build the tombs of the prophets (the reference to adorning the tombs of the righteous in Mt. 23:29c is absent from Luke); your fathers killed them". Somehow, the fact that "they killed and you build" demonstrates that the scribes are witnesses of and consent to the works of their fathers. The reasoning escapes most commentators,⁸ and it seems to be a *non sequitur*.⁹ Why should the builders of the tombs witness and approve the works of their fathers?

Derrett has sought a solution to the conundrum in the semitic love for midrashic puns. He perceived evidence of an original play on words in the Hebrew בונים, meaning builders. The term may refer to actual or metaphorical builders, including the builders of the Law, the interpreters and scholars.¹⁰ The play on words may have been best preserved by Luke's version with the meaning that the builders of the Torah, in fact, built the tombs of the prophets with their sterile interpretations.¹¹ Since the woe was originally addressed to

⁶ Derrett, "Tombs", pp. 187-188. He cited J. *Shek.* 2:47a where the saying is attributed to R. Nathan. Cf. also Gen.R. 82:10 and B. *Sanh.* 48a.

⁷ Cf. Fischel, "Martyr", p. 374.

⁸ For example, cf. Ernst Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu. Eine Erklärung des Markus-Evangeliums und der kanonischen Parallelen*, p. 428.

⁹ Some have claimed that Luke 11:47-48 may be an abbreviation of Q which has been preserved by Matthew and the *non sequitur* results from his attempt to make into prose what was essentially poetical. Cf. Steck, *Israel*, p. 28.

¹⁰ Derrett, "Tombs", pp. 184-185. He cited Isa. 54:13, 49:17 and Ps. 118:22. Cf. Acts 4:5-11.

The identification of the scholars as "builders" or "edifiers" is found in M. *Mikw.* 9:6 (R. Jose b. Halafta, A.D. 140-165) and explicitly so in B. *Shab.* 114a: "What are *banna'im*? R. Johanan: 'These are scholars who are engaged all their days in the upbuilding of the world'".

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

the scribes, this interpretation would be most fitting¹² as the woe slyly disparages the scribal interpretation of the Law.¹³

Matthew's version of the woe is less enigmatic than Luke's because of the addition of the phrase in 23:30: "and you say, 'Had we lived in the days of our fathers we would not have been partners with them in the blood of the prophets'". It is inferred from this protest of innocence that the scribes and Pharisees inadvertently bear witness against themselves that they are the sons of those who murdered¹⁴ the prophets. The best explication of these words seems to be that through their reverence for the slain prophets and their pompous grandiloquence they were complacently able to divorce themselves from the guilt of their fathers and to view themselves as more righteous than their fathers.¹⁵ The charge of hypocrisy may relate to the failure of their reflection on the past history of God's messengers to inspire a reassessment of their own lives. They washed their hands of all responsibility while remaining unrepentant, and their unrepentance is disclosed in the same attitude towards God's messengers as was evinced by their fathers. The emphasis in the Matthean text is upon the phrase "you are sons".¹⁶ Again, there is a possible word play on the double meaning of בן which means literally, a descendant, and, metaphorically, of the same nature.¹⁷ They are the spiritual

¹² This woe was originally addressed to the scribes as shown above in chap. 1 and cf. also pp. 41-42.

¹³ H. Benedict Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 192, perceived that the scribal preoccupation with the fixed Law formed a resistance to the "elements of creative renewal" which the prophetic tradition provided. The exegesis of T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, p. 101, also leaned toward a metaphorical understanding of building the tombs of the prophets: "It is possible that here Jesus is hitting at the absolute supremacy given by the scribes to the Law".

¹⁴ Φονεύειν appears to be inserted in place of ἀποκτείνειν by Matthew since he has a definite preference for this word (cf. n. 56), and because ἀποκτείνειν consistently occurs in the tradition; cf. 22:6, below. So Steck, *Israel*, p. 28; and Paul Hoffmann, *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle*, p. 163.

¹⁵ Steck, *Israel*, pp. 280-282; and Schulz, *Q*, p. 109.

¹⁶ Wolfgang Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel. Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums*, pp. 201-202; and Sjeff van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew*, p. 63.

¹⁷ M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lecture in Matthew*, p. 427. Cf. also Gustaf Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, p. 115; Ernst Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", *ZTK*, XLVIII:50-51, 1951; Steck, *Israel*, p. 281; Douglas R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 83; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 63; and Schulz, *Q*, p. 109. Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, pp. 12-13, sees an intentional word play on the Hebrew word for builder which he claims would explain the variation between Luke and Matthew. Cf. A. R. C. Leaney, *The Gospel According to Luke*, p. 194; and Derrett, "Tombs", pp. 192-193.

children of their fathers who killed the prophets in earlier generations.¹⁸

However, there is a further element involved in v. 31, because it underscores the scribes and Pharisees' share (κοινωνός) in the blood of the prophets (v. 30).¹⁹ In the seventh woe, Matthew is concerned with the guilt of murder; and v. 31 may be considered essentially an editorial transition designed to introduce the theme that follows: the murder of the prophets and the righteous and the implication of the present generation in the guilt.²⁰ This theme is not so pronounced in Luke as it is in Matthew and may be considered to be a Matthean interest.

MATTHEW 23:32

Matthew 23:32 has no parallel in Luke's account; and since the woe in v. 29 has no clear ending, it is reasonable to conclude that v. 32 is also a Matthean transition verse which functions as a bridge between the woe and the threat of judgment which follows.²¹ There is a subtle but distinct bid on Matthew's part to incriminate the present generation in the guilt of Israel, a guilt which is not simply inherited from previous generations but which stems from their active participation in the same sins—the rejection and persecution of God's messengers. In comparison with the Lucan text, 23:32 heightens the

¹⁸ Max Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, p. 15, §42, noted that the use of υἱός followed by a genitive reflects a prevalent semitic idiom that expresses intimate relation: "...he who reproduces and expresses in his own way of life that of another is called a 'son' of the latter". Cf. Mt. 5:9, 45; 8:12; 13:38; Jn. 8:44; Acts 13:10; and Gal. 3:7. The scribes and Pharisees have reproduced the same predilection to set their faces against God's messengers that typified the spirit of those who murdered the prophets.

¹⁹ Cf. Steck, *Israel*, p. 281.

²⁰ Paul S. Minear, "False Prophecy and Hypocrisy in the Gospel of Matthew", *Neues Testament und Kirche. Für Rudolf Schnackenburg*, p. 90; and Wilhelm Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen der Redaktion von Matthäus 23", *Orientierung an Jesus. Zur Theologie der Synoptiker. Für Josef Schmid*, p. 293. Against Steck, who believes the woe reproaches the continuity of guilt from the fathers to the sons, the stress is placed more on the continuity of sins and actions. So Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 164. As the fathers persecuted the prophets so do the sons.

²¹ So Manson, *Sayings*, p. 238; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 52; Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit. Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus*, p. 159, n. 1; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 132; Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, pp. 86, 88; Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 163; Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 293; and Schulz, *Q*, p. 109.

guilt of the scribes and Pharisees as leaders and representatives of “this generation” (23:36). In Luke 11:48, the impression is left that the nature of the guilt of the scribes is more passive, “they witness and condone”; whereas in Matthew, with the addition of v.32, the scribes and Pharisees are to complete²² irrevocably the full measure of sins.

The Imperative Reading

The imperative reading, πληρώσατε, should be accepted over the aorist indicative (found only in D and H) and the future indicative (found in B e syr^s) not only because of the very strong external evidence but also because the other readings can best be explained as attempts to soften the ruthless force of the imperative.²³ Consequently, v. 32 is a defiant and ironical challenge rather than a sad and pessimistic prediction.²⁴ The challenge assumes a prevalent doctrine in Judaism that when guilt or sins (of Gentiles) reach a certain

²² Cf. Gerhard Dellling, “πλήρης...”, *TDNT*, VI:291; Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, pp. 676-677. A. W. Argyle’s translation in *The Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 176, “You too must come up to your father’s standards”, fails to capture the nuance that they are to bring to an end something which had already begun.

²³ So Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, p. 320; Alan Hugh McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 338; and Frank Stagg, “Matthew”, *BBC*, VIII:214. Green, *Matthew*, p. 193, has argued that the aorist indicative is the best reading because v. 32 is closely tied to v. 31 and the conjunction καὶ would make the indicative more likely. W. C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, p. 251, in favoring the future indicative, claimed that the imperative appears to break the connection of thought. If v. 31 is understood to mean “you are of the same nature as your fathers and morally their heirs”, then the future would seem more apt: “you will sin as they sinned”. However, against Green, the emphatic καὶ ὑμεῖς is identical to 23:8, ὑμεῖς δέ with an imperative. The emphasis is upon “you”. The external evidence for the imperative is too strong to be disregarded.

²⁴ Plummer, *Matthew*, p. 320; Manson, *Sayings*, p. 238; Haenchen, “Matthäus 23”, p. 52; and Reinhart Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium*, pp. 87-88. Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, p. 88, wrote: “In the Matthean version... the sending of the prophets is made by Jesus in the present with a view to making manifest the guilt of his contemporaries, in order that (ὅπως) the accumulated wrath aroused by the murder of God’s prophets in former generations may be visited upon this last generation”. It has been pointed out by Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, p. 125, that the imperative in v. 32 fits a fairly common prophetic pattern; cf. Amos 4:4; Isa. 6:9, 8:9-10; Jer. 7:21; and also Rev. 22:11.

level, the longanimity of God will be exhausted, the time for repentance finally squandered, and certain judgment will ensue.²⁵ It is clear from v. 32 that this is applied to Israel; and the point of inundation has not yet been reached by the murder of prophets in former generations, but it is left to "this generation" to complete the measure to overflowing.

²⁵ There exists a widespread notion in the Old Testament that God allots to the nations their times (Dan. 2:21), and in the course of that time they lay the foundations for their judgment. Cf. Gen. 15:16 and Jub. 14:16, "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete" (LXX: ἀναπεπλήρωνται); Dan. 4:34 (LXX), "the sins of Nebuchadnezzar were fulfilled" (ἐπληρώθησαν); 8:23, "the sins of the transgressors have been fulfilled" (πληρουμένων τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν); and En. 50:2, "the day of affliction on which evil shall have been treasured up against the sinners". The author of II Maccabees sought to console the Jews for their recent calamities and in doing so made explicit the idea that a full measure of sins is accorded to non-Israelites at which time a final judgment ensues:

¹²Now I urge those who read this book not to be depressed by such calamities, but to recognize that these punishments were designed not to destroy but to discipline our people. ¹³In fact, not to let the impious alone for long, but to punish them immediately, is a sign of great kindness. ¹⁴For in the case of the other nations the Lord waits patiently to punish them until they have reached the full measure of their sins (μέχρι τοῦ καταντήσαντας αὐτοὺς πρὸς ἐκπλήρωσιν ἁμαρτιῶν κολάσαι); but he does not deal in this way with us (II Macc. 6:12-14, RSV).

The concept of a "measure", a measure of guilt or of righteousness, is enunciated in Wisd. 11:20 and II Esd. 4:36-37 (cf. Dan. 5:25-27). That God has "weighed the age in the balance, and measured the times by measure, and numbered the times by number; and he will not move or arouse them until that measure is fulfilled" (II Esd. 4:36c-37) implies a certain providential inevitability to the working out of sin and judgment—God does not interfere in the course of sin. Matthew 23:32 is in accord with the notion that the sinners—in this case, the disobedient oppressors of God's messengers—will continue with their sin until they are ripe for judgment; at which time, there will be a reckoning of accounts.

What is distinctive in Mt. 23:32 and other Christian literature (cf. I Thess. 2:15-16, Rom 2:5) is the application of the concept of an allotted measure to *Israel* and not to the Gentiles (cf. 4Q 185 2:9-10 and T. Neof. Gen. 14:19). The mood of Barn. 5:11 has certainly been influenced by Mt. 23:32:

So then the Son of God came in the flesh for this reason, that he might complete the total of the sins (ἵνα τὸ τέλειον τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἀνακεφαλαιώσῃ) of those who persecuted his prophets to death (cf. also 14:5).

Barnabas in fact provides a good commentary on Mt. 23:32, for Matthew's intention in this verse could not have been far from this articulation of the result, if not the purpose, of Jesus' ministry. A similar expression is found in Gos. Pet. 17: "And they fulfilled all things and completed the measure of their sins on their head". Notably this occurred at the moment of the crucifixion.

I Thessalonians 2:15-16

A close parallel to this striking idea is found in I Thessalonians 2:15-16. Paul relates the situation in Thessalonica to the suffering of the churches in Judea at the hands of "the Jews":

¹⁵who also killed the Lord Jesus as well as the prophets and persecuted us (out), not pleasing God and being hostile to all men. ¹⁶They hindered us from preaching to the Gentiles that they might be saved, with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But the wrath finally has come upon them.

There is a formal agreement in the key words between Matthew 23 and I Thessalonians: ἀποκτείνειν (23:31, φονεύειν: 23:34, 37), προφήτας (23:34, 37), διώκειν (23:34), and ἀναπληροῦν (23:32). A similar pattern in the flow of thought may also be found:

I Thessalonians	Matthew
They killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets.	Killing the prophets (vv. 31, 34)
They persecuted us out.	Killed, crucified, scourged, and persecuted from city to city (v. 34)
They displeased God and oppose men by hindering the preaching to the Gentiles.	Cf. 23:13, they shut the kingdom to men.
They fill up the measure of sins.	Fill up the measure of your fathers! (v. 32)
God's wrath has come upon them.	All righteous blood upon you (v. 36 cf. vv. 37-39)

The similarity of these themes, concentrated in such a short span of verses, is too unusual to be coincidental; and it has not gone unnoticed that this is a highly uncharacteristic way for Paul to refer both to Jesus' death and to Israel (cf. Rom. 11:25). Consequently, it has often been suggested that Matthew and Paul utilized a similar tradition (which originally need not have been Christian).²⁶

²⁶ Cf. McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 339; J. B. Orchard, "Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels", *Bib*, XIX:19-42, 1938; C. H. Dodd, "Matthew and Paul", *New Testament Studies*, pp. 53-66; E. Cothenet, "La II^e épître aux Thessaloniens et l'apocalypse synoptique", *RechSR*, XLII:5-39, 1954; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 96; R. Schippers, "The Pre-Synoptic Tradition in I Thessalonians II 13-16", *NovT*, VIII:223-234, 1966; Otto Michel, "Fragen zu I Thessalonicher 2, 14-16", *Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament?* pp. 50-59; Steck, *Israel*, pp. 274-278; Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, pp. 113-123; J. Coppens, "Miscellanées Bibliques, LXXX: Une Diatribe Antijuive dans I Thess., II, 13-16", *ETL*, LI:90-95, 1975. Goulder, *Midrash*, pp. 165-166, argued that Matthew followed Paul; but Birger A. Pearson, "I Thessalonians 2:13-16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpretation", *HTR*, LXIV:79-94, 1971,

There exists, however, three major differences between I Thessalonians 2:15-16 and Matthew 23:32-36. First, the Pauline passage reproaches the Jews for opposing the mission to pagans, while the Matthean tradition has in view the persecution of messengers sent to Israel.²⁷ Secondly, in the Pauline sequence, the reference to “always filling the measure of sins” occurs after the enumeration of the Jewish sins, including the murder of the Lord Jesus, as the result of this wickedness (εἰς τό + the infinitive normally has the consecutive sense in Paul). The reference to “full-filling” the measure is placed first in the Matthean sequence not as a result clause but as an imperative—an ironic prophecy that “the sons of the murderers of the prophets” will go on murdering until they are ripe for God’s judgment. The measure is to be completed by the persecution specifically of the envoys of Jesus; then the murderers will be held accountable for “all righteous blood”. Finally, in Paul the execution of the sentence appears to have taken place already or at least proleptically (ἐφθασεν and εἰς τέλος are difficult to interpret). Matthew has utilized these words (23:32-36) as a prophesy of Jesus that the measure allotted to this generation was coming to an end. It was only to be completed by the persecution of those commissioned by Jesus. Matthew, therefore, must have understood v. 32 as referring to a final allotment of time which he and his readers would regard in retrospect as already having come to pass with the destruction of the Temple.

MATTHEW 23:33

Verse 33, “Snakes, sons of vipers, How shall you escape from the judgment of Gehenna?” must also be viewed as editorial.²⁸ It is without a Lucan parallel but recalls the earlier words of John the Baptist (Mt. 3:7, against the Pharisees and Sadducees; Lk. 3:7,

argued that vv. 15-16 are an interpolation into the text of the epistle from the Matthean tradition.

²⁷ Streck, *Israel*, p. 291; and E. Cothenet, “Les prophetes chretiens dans l’Évangile selon saint Matthieu”, *L’Évangile selon Matthieu: Redaction et Theologie*, p. 297.

²⁸ Φεύγετε: Mt. 7/Mk. 5/Lk. 3; κρίσις: Mt. 12/Mk. 10/Lk. 4; γέννα: Mt. 7/Mk. 3/Lk. 1. Adolf Harnack, *The Sayings of Jesus: The Second Source of St. Matthew and Luke*, pp. 102-103; Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, p. 130; Manson, *Sayings*, p. 238; Haenchen, “Matthäus 23”, p. 52; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 159; Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, p. 87; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp. 64-65; Pesch, “Theologische Aussagen”, p. 293; and Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, p. 435, all believe it is redactional. Matthew took this phrase from Q and used it again much as he did the phrase in Mt. 4:23, taken from Mk. 1:38.

against the crowd). Matthew picked up the epithet,²⁹ once again, in 12:34 and used it against the Pharisees (γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, πῶς...). As a result, the phrase would bring to mind a matrix of associations for the reader. It would recall the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to John for baptism without repentance. This prompted John's earth-shattering announcement in 3:9-10 that relation to Abraham did not assure God's eternal protection: God could raise up a new people from inanimate rocks, and they should take heed for they are barren trees about to be cut down and thrown into the fire. The context of judgment also permeates 12:33-34. The Pharisees will be condemned by their words, and they cannot speak good because they are evil. The inclusion of v. 33 in chap. 23 with these associations serves to magnify the implication that God will soon bring about a final judgment³⁰ against a wicked people. There is no offer of repentance because the possibility of conversion is excluded.

MATTHEW 23:34-36

The straw which breaks the camel's back will be the response to the mission of those sent by Jesus. The past record is plain to see, but completion of the measure will be reached by the scribes and Pharisees' treatment of Christian prophets.³¹ That this is Matthew's understanding is made clear from the subtle "christianization" of the pericope in Matthew in comparison with Luke.³² This can be enumerated briefly. In Matthew, Jesus is specifically identified as the sender of the messengers (23:34) rather than the Wisdom of God,

²⁹ Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus*, p. 38, n. 2, finds this harsh epithet unparalleled except in apocalyptic connections.

In addition, the serpent was widely viewed as the one on account of whom death came into the world. In the context, the Jewish leaders are the serpents on account of whom death came to Israel. They, as the appointed leaders of the people, led many to sin; and, according to M. Ab. 5:18, "he that leads the many to sin, to him shall be given no means for repentance".

³⁰ Cf. Joachim Jeremias, "γεέννα", *TDNT*, I:657-658. John L. McKenzie, "The Gospel According to Matthew", *JBC*, p. 103, noted that this verse connotes a condemnation that goes beyond God's judgment in history. Cf. Mt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9.

³¹ It must be borne in mind that the fate of the leaders cannot be dissociated from that of the people they lead; the object of reproach, therefore, has necessarily broadened to include the entire nation of Israel to whom the messengers have been sent. Cf. Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, pp. 151-152.

³² Cf. Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 132. Günter Klein, "Die Verfolgung der Apostel, Luk 11, 49", *Neue Testament und Geschichte*, pp. 113-114, speaks of a "consensus" of scholarship.

as in Luke. There is a subtle identification of the fate of these emissaries with the fate of Christian disciples by the addition of the details of crucifixion and scourging in v. 34. Matthew has also added the word δίκαιος four times in vv. 28, 29 and 35 which has no parallel in Luke.³³ The concern in the Lucan text is with "the blood of all the prophets" (11:50); but in Matthew this phrase, "the blood of the prophets", is used in v.30 to refer to the fathers' guilt. However, "this generation" will be accountable for "*all righteous blood*" which significantly and unambiguously extends beyond the blood of the prophets of old. Finally, a clear emphasis is placed upon "you" throughout vv. 29-39. This makes the issue definitely a contemporary one and not a problem regrettably bequeathed by unrighteous ancestors. Matthew, through deliberate alterations, makes it most clear that it is the generation of Jesus and of the early church immediately thereafter which has incurred the wrath of God beyond the point of redemption.

The Wisdom of God

In 11:49, Luke continues the woe: διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ εἶπεν, Ἀποστελῶ... Matthew has in 23:34: διὰ τοῦτο ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω... The best judgment seems to be that Luke preserves the original statement in Q and that Matthew has altered the "Wisdom of God" to an emphatic ἐγὼ so that Jesus would be viewed as the sender of the prophets.³⁴ It would be most unlikely for Luke to have changed an "I saying" into a Wisdom saying since Luke shows no particular interest in Wisdom speculation,³⁵ and this would reverse the greater tendency to preserve tradition as the words of

³³ Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 158.

³⁴ So Harnack, *Sayings*, p. 103; Erich Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 189; Bultmann, *History*, p. 114; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 53; Werner Georg Kümmel, "Die Weherufe über die Schriftgelehrten und Pharisäer (Matthäus 23, 13-16)", *Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament?* p. 139, who changed his position from *Promise and Fulfillment: The Eschatological Message of Jesus*, p. 80; Steck, *Israel*, p. 29; Dieter Lührmann, *Die Redaktion der Logienquelle*, p. 46; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 120; Suggs, *Wisdom*, pp. 14-15; Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 294; Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 164; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 435; and Schulz, *Q*, p. 336. Against this, cf. Allen, *Matthew*, p. 249; McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 339; C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, p. 46, n. 1; Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, p. 92, n. 3; Paul Gaechter, *Das Matthäus Evangelium*, p. 750; and S. Legasse, "Scribes et Disciples de Jesus", *RB*, LXVIII:331, 1961. van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 67, reserves judgment on the matter.

³⁵ Suggs, *Wisdom*, pp. 14 and 35, noted Luke's editorial comment in 7:29-30, which interprets 7:35, as a demonstration of Luke's disinterest in a Wisdom tradition. Cf. Klein, "Die Verfolgung", pp. 120-121.

Jesus.³⁶ It is unlikely, as Schlatter has argued, that Luke made the alteration because it would seem too brash for Jesus to assume blatantly divine prerogatives in the home of a Pharisee.³⁷ If this were true, it would also mean that Luke would have had to change v. 49 to the third person. The absence of direct address in the Lucan account is hard to explain unless it is attributable to Luke's source. Another argument that Luke preserves the original Q formulation is based on the supposition that the sending of the prophets, implying past, present and future, is suitable only for a transhistorical subject like Wisdom.³⁸ It thus seems apparent that Matthew made the change³⁹ because he understood Jesus, as son of God, to be also the Wisdom of God⁴⁰ and desired to make it unequivocal in the text

³⁶ Bultmann, *History*, p. 114. Cf. Mt. 10:32 and Lk. 12:8.

³⁷ Adolf Schlatter, *Das Evangelium des Lukas*, p. 521. However, cf. Lk. 19:10. Stendahl, *School*, p. 92, n. 3; Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p. 750; and Kümmel, *Promise*, p. 81, suggested that the Wisdom of God was understood by Luke simply as another name for Jesus (cf. 1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Col. 2:3). However, if this were a circumlocution, one would expect the present tense, λέγει, instead of the aorist, εἶπεν.

³⁸ Bultmann, *History*, p. 114. Cf. Prov. 1:20-33. Many have concluded that Luke's "Wisdom of God" preserves a reference to an apocryphal Wisdom apocalypse that is no longer extant. So Harnack, *Sayings*, p. 103; J. Hugh Michael, "The Lament over Jerusalem", *AJT*, XXII:102, 1918; Bultmann, *History*, p. 114; Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 189; Theodore H. Robinson, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 192; Julius Schniewind, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 234; Karl H. Rengstorff, "ἀποστέλλω", *TDNT*, I:428; Legasse, "Scribes", p. 326; Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, p. 495; Suggs, *Wisdom*, pp. 15-16; and Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 294. Against this, cf. particularly, Dodd, *Parables*, p. 46, n. 1, and Lloyd Gaston, *No Stone on Another: Studies in the Significance of the Fall of Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 322, who sardonically remarked: "The idea that this is an indication of a quotation from a lost apocryphal book called ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ is no less absurd for having been so often adopted". It is possible that Lk. 11:49 may be a reference to a scriptural text such as Jer. 7:25 or Prov. 1:20-33. Stendahl, *School*, p. 92, proposed Jub. 1:12. Others have suggested that the phrase means "God, in his wisdom, said". Cf. Manson, *Sayings*, p. 148; W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, p. 155; Leaney, *Luke*, p. 194; and Klein, "Die Verfolgung", p. 121. Cf. also Suggs, *Wisdom*, p. 18. For further discussion of the tradition-history question, cf. Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, pp. 124-132.

³⁹ Matthew omitted ἡ σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ, inserted ἐγώ, and changed v. 34 to direct address.

⁴⁰ Suggs, *Wisdom*, pp. 23 and 59, claimed that it was Matthew's conscious intention to point to Jesus in terms of Wisdom. Cf. Steck, *Israel*, p. 29; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 133; Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 164; James M. Robinson, "Jesus as Sophos and Sophia: Wisdom Tradition and the Gospels", *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity*, pp. 9-11. Marshall D. Johnson, "Reflections on a Wisdom Approach to Matthew's Christology", *CBQ*, XXXVI:55, 1974, quarreled with Suggs that if this were indeed Matthew's intention, why should he remove a logion from the mouth of Wisdom and attribute it to Jesus? This would indicate, rather, a lessening of Matthew's interest in Wisdom. He argued that the Matthean passage can best be read as a reflection of the universal early Christian conviction that Jesus 'sent' or commissioned his disciples who in turn must be prepared to face persecution.

as well as to make it unequivocal that those who were to be persecuted were the envoys of Jesus. Jesus was the one who sent messengers into the world (10:5-6, 16; 28:20), and these messengers⁴¹ in v. 34 must be associated with the Christian disciples. This would explain the change from the future, ἀποστελῶ, to the present, ἀποστέλλω, because he was thinking of the contemporary situation of the church.⁴²

As a result of Matthew's redaction, the διὰ τοῦτο, which is a relic from the partially erased introductory formula,⁴³ takes on a new significance in the Matthean text in comparison with its original significance in Q as it is represented in Luke. Hare has adverted to the fact that the reference of διὰ τοῦτο has been drastically altered.⁴⁴ In Luke 11:49, it is clear that διὰ τοῦτο means because of the situation described in vv. 47-48; that is, because of the admission of guilt for the blood of the prophets as manifested in the construction of the tombs of the prophets, the Wisdom of God will send more prophets so that this generation will have to answer for it all. In Matthew, the relationship of the "therefore" to the reason for the commission of prophets has been altered by the interpolation of vv. 32-33. It has subsequently taken on a more fateful connotation: "because you are of the same murderous nature as those who killed former prophets, I am sending my prophets whom you will also persecute and kill so that then you will complete the measure of sins and not escape the judgment of Gehenna".⁴⁵

The Prophets, Wisemen and Scribes

It is very difficult to decide whether Matthew's "prophets, wisemen and scribes" is more original than Luke's "prophets and apostles" or vice versa. On the one hand, Matthew's list appears to be more

⁴¹ Matthew apparently inserted ἰδοὺ in place of what was stricken from the source: Mt. 62/Mk: 7/Lk: 51. So, Harnack, *Sayings*, p. 103; and Schulz, *Q*, p. 336.

⁴² Schulz, *Q*, p. 336. Cf. Steck, *Israel*, p. 30; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 122; and Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 436. D has the present in the Lucan text, apparently assimilating it to Matthew.

⁴³ Legasse, "Scribes", p. 324, claimed διὰ τοῦτο was more suitable as an introduction to a citation. Cf. Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 52; and Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 127.

⁴⁴ Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, pp. 86-87.

⁴⁵ Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 443, stated that "Jesus' implicit message is always repentance". This is not doubted, but the context and redactional evidence in Matthew's text indicates that the editor looks back in retrospect when he took for granted that it was too late for repentance.

Jewish since the wiseman (הכם) and the scribe (ספר) were materially identical,⁴⁶ and since it would be difficult to explain why Matthew would have changed “apostles” had it been original. Consequently, it seems that he preserves the Q text. At the same time, it would seem more likely that Luke would have altered the less familiar wisemen and scribes to apostles even though it would have been anachronistic, as the term in Luke clearly refers to the twelve disciples.⁴⁷ On the other hand, it has been tendered that Matthew made the change in his text, adding wisemen and scribes, because he had in mind distinctive offices in his church.⁴⁸ Whether this is true or not, it may be assumed that Matthew would have understood those sent by Jesus to entail *Christian* missionaries, for the disciples are closely aligned with the prophets and the righteous in the gospel. The disciples are privileged to see and hear what many prophets and righteous longed to witness (13:17). When they are commissioned by Jesus to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, they are given a message to proclaim and authority to perform miracles (10:6-8).⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Wilckens, “σοφία”, pp. 505-507.

⁴⁷ Steck, *Israel*, pp. 30-32, 291, claimed that Luke’s “prophets and apostles” was original to Q and that the apostles do not refer to Christian disciples. He argued that when Luke referred to Christian apostles he always employed the definite article (except in the predicate nominative of Lk. 6:13). He also maintained that this word must refer to Old Testament envoys because the guilt referred to in the logion is essentially limited to pre-Christian times since they had been sent to the forefathers and not to the audience. He also claimed that it would be unusual for Christian apostles to be sent by Wisdom. Cf. also Manson, *Sayings*, pp. 102-103; Hans Frhr. von Campenhausen, “Der urchristliche Apostelbegriff”, *StTh*, 1:102, 1948; Walter Schmithals, *The Office of Apostle in the Early Church*, p. 97, n. 7.

Cf. the arguments of Klein, “Die Verfolgung”, pp. 116ff., against Steck’s position; and further, the evidence in favor of Luke’s coupling of προφήτας καὶ ἀποστόλους in O. J. F. Seitz, “The Commission of Prophets and ‘Apostles’: A Reexamination of Matthew 23:34 with Luke 11:49”, *StEv*, IV:238-239 (TU, 102), 1968; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 123; Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, pp. 165-166; and Schulz, *Q*, p. 336.

⁴⁸ T. W. Manson, *Sayings*, p. 239; G. D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel Matthew*, p. 126; Strecker, *Der Weg*, pp. 37-38; Legasse, “Scribes”, p. 498; and Cothenet, “Les prophètes chrétiens”, p. 296, n. 62. Cf. Mt. 13:52 for the reference to “scribes”, but this does not explain the inclusion of σοφοί since the only other mention of them in Matthew is 11:25 where Jesus thanks the Father for hiding these things from the “wise”. It is unlikely that Matthew would have allowed this verse to remain as is had he been conscious of a special office of σοφοί in his congregation. On the other hand, the reference to “wisemen” would be quite natural in a Wisdom saying, while it would be less likely for Matthew to have deleted “Wisdom” and then to have inserted “wisemen”.

⁴⁹ On the motif of the danger of becoming a false prophet in Matthew, cf. Minear, “False Prophecy”, pp. 76-78.

Those who receive the twelve receive Jesus, and receiving a prophet, they shall receive a prophet's reward; receiving a righteous man, they shall receive a righteous man's reward (10:41-42). The clearest link between the prophets and Christian disciples is found in 5:11-12 where the disciples are assured that as the prophets were persecuted so they will be persecuted. Certainly, the emissaries in 23:34 were viewed by Matthew to be part of the mission enterprise of the church to Israel after the resurrection. The fact that Matthew's text has the present participle, ἐκχυνόμενον, in 23:34, while Luke 11:50 has the perfect, ἐκκεχυομένον, indicates that the redactor (whether or not he made a deliberate alteration) appreciated the connotation that the blood is continuously being poured out even to the present time. In Matthew's text, the circumstance of persecution cannot be viewed as a sad chapter in a bygone era, the days of the Old Testament prophets, as is true of the Lucan parallel; and this must be interpreted as directly attributable to the purposes of the Matthean redactor or, if he did not make an alteration, in agreement with his purposes.

This becomes more manifest in Matthew's expansion of the tribulations to be suffered by those sent by Jesus. Luke has in 11:49 καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀποκτενοῦσιν καὶ διώξουσιν. Matthew has added after "you will kill": καὶ σταυρώσετε, καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν μαστιγώσετε ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς ὑμῶν καὶ διώξετε ἀπὸ πόλεως εἰς πόλιν.⁵⁰ This sequence is both redundant (kill, crucify) and anticlimactic (kill, crucify, scourge, persecute) and refers to other passages in Matthew. In 10:17b, the disciples are forewarned that they are being sent like sheep into the midst of wolves who will drag them unto Sanhedrins and ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν μαστιγώσουσιν ὑμᾶς. In 10:23, they are informed that they will be persecuted from city to city; when persecuted in one, they are to flee to the next.

Matthew may have reference to the persecution of earlier Christians at the hands of the Jews;⁵¹ however, the inclusion of crucifixion

⁵⁰ So Harnack, *Sayings*, p. 104; Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 189; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 53; Kümmel, "Weherufe", p. 139; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 82; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 30; Rolf Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium*, p. 57, n. 53; Steck, *Israel*, pp. 31, n. 6, and 291; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 495; Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, p. 92; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 123; Suggs, *Wisdom*, p. 15; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 69; and Schulz, *Q*, p. 335.

⁵¹ Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 495, believed 23:34 contains a historical reminiscence of the martyrdoms of Stephen, James (Zebedee), James, the Lord's brother, and Simon Peter. Cf. Acts 8:11; 12:17; 13:50-52; 14:5, 19-22; and 17:10, 13. Cf. Davies, *Sermon on the Mount*, p. 297.

complicates matters since it was purely a Roman punishment. Hare's study uncovered no evidence that after the Hasmonean period the Jews employed this form of persecution, and clearly it is the persecution orchestrated by the Jewish leaders which Matthew has in view.⁵² It would seem, then, that Matthew is not simply alluding to actual fates of Christian missionaries in v. 34; rather, the reference to crucifixion is an allusion to the death of Jesus himself. In a very subtle way the culpability of the sons of those who murdered the prophets has been augmented. It is not simply the blood of the prophets which breathes revenge; it is also the blood of Jesus' envoys. And yet, the guilt extends even further to include as well the blood of Jesus, the son of God. This is clear from the Matthean redaction of 20:19 where the two verbs *μαστιγῶσαι* and *σταυρῶσαι* appear together for the first time in the gospel. The son of man shall be given over to the authorities to be "mocked", "scourged" and "crucified" (the Markan sequence, 10:34, is *ἐμπαΐξουσιν, ἐμπτύσουσιν, μαστιγώσουσιν* and *ἀποκτενοῦσιν*; the Lucan, 18:32-33, *ἐμπαυχθήσεται, ὕβρισθήσεται, ἐμπυσοθήσεται, μαστιγώσαντες, ἀποκτενοῦσιν*). Matthew has added the reference to crucifixion as he also did in 26:2 (the same phrase, *εἰς τὸ σταυρωθῆναι*) where Jesus again foretells his death. "Crucify" is, therefore, a theological term in the gospel which refers to Jesus' death; and its addition in 23:34 would unquestionably call to mind the crucifixion of Jesus. Its relation to the fate of Jesus' emissaries should only be seen in terms of 10:24-25—the disciple is not above his master.⁵³ If they crucified the Lord, they will crucify the servants.

The phrase *πάν αἷμα δίκαιον ἐκχυνόμενον* in 23:34 would also certainly jog the memory of the Christian familiar with the account

The reference to the persecution from city to city may simply be a reminiscence of Jesus' warning to his disciples (10:23); but the Mishnah records the sentiment of R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, a near contemporary, that when the people (on the frontier) "go about from city to city" it is a sign of the desolation of Israel (M. *Sot.* 9:15). It is possible that Matthew was aware of this imagery (cf. 24:15-20) as a sign of doom. If so, he understood it in quite another way. The persecution of Christian missionaries who are driven from city to city was not a sign of their desolation but was both a sign and a cause of the desolation of Israel (23:38).

⁵² Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 53; and Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, pp. 88-92. Paul Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus*, pp. 62-66, understands "you crucify" in a causative sense as in Acts 2:36 and 4:10. Green, *Matthew*, p. 193, believes it has been interpolated into the text on internal grounds despite the fact that only two mss., 4 and 273, omit it.

⁵³ van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 69.

of Jesus' last supper where the phrase τὸ αἷμα μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ... ἐκχυνόμενον reappears. The reference to "blood being poured out" would climactically suggest the death of Jesus, whose blood must be included as contributing to the overflowing guilt of this generation. Therefore, we conclude that by making minor alterations in 23:34 Matthew has deliberately attempted to shape the reader's perception. He wants him to have in view the fate of Christian missionaries and of Jesus and to realize that Israel will have to answer for its failure to receive these last messengers from God. This means that Matthew is not simply alluding to a contemporary situation of persecution by Jewish opponents. The whole section bears upon the guilt accrued by this generation, and the subject of guilt is examined only with respect to its inexorable outcome—the final judgment of God. It is only for this reason that Matthew alludes to the death of Jesus as well as his envoys.

The Emphasis on "You"

Matthew has made other alterations which are consistent with his intention of placing the burden of guilt for Israel's history at the feet of the recalcitrant leaders of Israel, the scribes and Pharisees. In 11:49, Luke has the third person: the prophets and apostles will be sent εἰς αὐτούς. Matthew has changed this to πρὸς ὑμᾶς;⁵⁴ and thereby, he has made v. 34 conform to the direct address in 23:29. There is an emphasis on "you" in the Matthean text beginning with v. 31, υἱοὶ ἔστε, and continuing with the emphatic καὶ ὑμεῖς πληρώσατε in v. 32. Matthew also used the second person plural verb in v. 34, "you shall kill", etc., in contrast to the third person in Luke 11:49. It should also be noted that the scourging takes place in "your synagogues".⁵⁵ In 23:35, Matthew reads "all righteous blood shall come upon you" which differs markedly from the more impersonal statement in Luke 11:50, "the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this

⁵⁴ So Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 189; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 54; Bultmann, *History*, p. 399; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 81, n. 45; Steck, *Israel*, p. 29, n. 3; Suggs, *Wisdom*, p. 14; Lührmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 46; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 122; and Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 164.

⁵⁵ Cf. Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; and 13:54; and Kilpatrick, *Origins*, p. 109; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 79, n. 27; Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 29; and Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 30.

generation". Again in v. 35, Matthew changed the participial construction in Q (Lk. 11:50), Zechariah, τοῦ ἀπολομένου, to a second person plural verb, ὃν ἐφονεύσατε.⁵⁶ It is unclear in Luke just who the guilty ones are, but in Matthew it is unequivocal. The scribes and Pharisees as "sons of those who murdered the prophets" incarnate the spirit of their fathers. They are murderers themselves; and the magnitude of their guilt far exceeds the guilt of their fathers.

The Violent Fate of the Prophets

Steck, in his creative and exhaustive study of a *Vorstellungskomplex*, has shown that the theme of the violent fate of the prophets which runs through 23:29-24:2 accords with the classic representation of Israel's guilt that was used to explain the apparent divine rejection of Israel and the ensuing punishment in historical events.⁵⁷ Other scholars have noted that the murder of the prophets had become almost an article of belief in heterodox Judaism despite the fact that none of the three major canonical prophets nor any of the twelve minor prophets suffered a violent death at the hands of the people.⁵⁸ Fischel has shown that by the first century it had become a generally accepted truism, almost a law of history, that prophets must suffer martyrdom.⁵⁹ This idea, along with its affiliation with Israel's guilt, is found throughout the New Testament and is expressly stated by Stephen in Acts 7:52:

⁵²Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom

⁵⁶ ΦΟΝΕΥΕΙΝ: Mt. 5/Mk. 1/Lk. 1. Steck, *Israel*, p. 31, n. 8; Hare, *Jewish Persecution*; and van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 66, believed Matthew altered the verb. Schulz, *Q*, p. 338, allowed it as a possibility. On the charge of φονεῦς in Matthew, cf. van Tilborg, pp. 46ff. The charge in 23:35 cannot be confined strictly to the scribes and Pharisees but must involve the entire people; cf. McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 340; and Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, pp. 93-94.

⁵⁷ Cf. Steck, *Israel*, pp. 289-316, for his final summary.

⁵⁸ Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Die Jüdischen Prophetenmorde*, pp. 17-21; and Fischel, "Martyr and Prophet", p. 279. The idea is found in Old Testament, Rabbinic, Christian, and Koranic tradition. Cf. I Kgs. 18:4, 13; 19:10, 14; II Kgs. 17:13-18; I Chron. 16:22; II Chron. 24:19; 36:14-16; Ps. 105:15; Jer. 7:25; 25:4; 26:5, 20-23; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4; Lam. 2:20; 4:16; Dan. 9:6, 10; Bar. 1:21; 2:20, 24; Jub. 1:12; II Esd. 1:32; 2:1; 7:60, 130; 8:79; Lev. R. 13:2; Lam. R. 4:13; Josephus, *Bell.* VI:109f., 288; and *Ant.* II:327.

⁵⁹ Fischel, "Martyr and Prophet", p. 279. Cf. also Adolf Schlatter, "Der Märtyrer in den Anfängen der Kirche", *Synagoge und Kirche bis zum Barkochba-Aufstand*, pp. 269-277; and Urbach, *The Sages*, pp. 558-560.

you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³you, who received the Law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.⁶⁰

The thesis of Odil Hannes Steck. Steck maintained that this widespread conception stemmed specifically from a deuteronomistic interpretation of history that had its earliest roots in Nehemiah 9:26 and originally developed as an explanation of God's judgment for the disasters of 722 and 587 B.C. The deuteronomic perception of history was based on three premises: 1) the disobedience of Israel and the patience of God as manifested in the sending of the prophets to warn Israel; 2) the obduracy of Israel manifested in the rejection of the prophets; and 3) the subsequent divine rejection and punishment of all Israel.⁶¹ The idea of the peoples' violent treatment of the prophets was formed in order to express and accentuate Israel's continuous and willful resistance to God's will.⁶² However, a further development came when 587 B.C. was no longer viewed as God's definitive judgment upon Israel; and it was believed that another chance for repentance and obedience was offered by God. With the hellenistic reform under Antiochus IV (ca. 175 B.C.), there was still another development in this conception when the *entire* history of Israel became viewed as one of permanent disobedience. Repentance was still possible, but in the final judgment there would be a separation within Israel (no longer between Israel and her heathen enemies) between the pious and the sinners. This idea prevailed in the Hassidic movement but was also taken up with different nuances by some of the Jerusalem priesthood, some Jewish wisdom teachers and prophetic-apocalyptic groups, who, together, joined in the fight against hellenistic forces. After the dissolution of the Hassidic movement, the concept was kept alive in Essene circles. It clearly was preserved by early Christians and probably by John the Baptist; and Jesus seems to have seized this idea although augmenting it with his own individuality.⁶³

⁶⁰ A preponderant number of references are to be found in Matthew's gospel (5:12 = Lk. 6:23; 13:57 = Mk. 6:4 = Lk. 4:24; 17:12 = Mk. 9:13; 21:35, the plural servants as opposed to the singular in Mk. 12:3 and Lk. 20:10; and 22:6). This idea of the violent fate of the prophets and the resultant guilt and impending punishment of the perpetrators must be viewed as a significant interest of the Evangelist even though this idea, in various contours, was traditional and widespread (cf. also I Thess. 2:15; Rom. 11:3; Heb. 11:32-38; Jas. 5:10; Rev. 16:6, 18:24; and Lk. 13:33) and probably reflected the same conviction Jesus held.

⁶¹ Steck, *Israel*, pp. 60-80.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 184-189; cf. pp. 99-105 and 222-227.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 285-288. For criticism of Steck's thesis, cf. Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, pp. 162-171.

The violent fate of the prophets and Matthew 23. Steck claimed that this Deuteronomic view of history governed the formulation of both Matthew 21:28-22:7 and 23:29-24:2 (Lk. 11:47-51; 13:34-35).⁶⁴ He believed that the Palestinian Jewish Christian conception of the continued rejection of God's messengers by Israel was merged with the hellenistic early Christian tradition that the rejection and murder of Jesus as God's son brought the final judgment of Israel.⁶⁵ However, this tradition in 23:29ff. may go back to Jesus, Q, or Q^{Mt}; it need not be original to Matthew.⁶⁶ Matthew was not consciously deuteronomistic;⁶⁷ he adopted the tradition at the point where the hellenistic and Palestinian traditions had been fused by the church. But Steck has made an invaluable contribution in uncovering the matrix of ideas which form the backdrop of 23:29-24:2. Matthew is dealing with the issue of Israel's perennial disobedience as manifested in the murder of the prophets that continued into the present generation (ἐκχυνόμενον), and, integrally associated with this motif, the issue of the inevitable judgment of God. Matthew has heightened what may be designated as deuteronomistic implications. Now, "this generation" may be charged with the murder of the son of God and of the envoys of the son of God. In this section, 23:29-36, the redactor has attempted to predispose the reader to appreciate the pattern of cause and effect between these final deaths of the righteous, which filled up the measure of guilt, and the destruction of the Temple.

The Martyrdom of Abel and Zechariah. The topic of 23:35 alludes to the impending final judgment incurred by the shedding of righteous blood. Implicitly assumed in this statement is another idea, widespread in Judaism, that innocent blood cries out until it is avenged and that God would call to account those who were responsible.⁶⁸ The

⁶⁴ Steck, *Israel*, p. 304.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 305.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 290-291, wrote: "Auch Mt hat diesen Abschnitt in 23: (13) 29-39 aus der Gattungstradition des prophetischen Gerichtswortes gestaltet, ihm aber vor allem gegenüber der 23:29-31, 34-36 aufgenommen Q-Vorlage durch Komposition und erhebliche Eingriffe in den Wortlaut der verwendeten Traditionsstücke ein neues Aussageprofil gegeben".

⁶⁷ Derrett, "Tombs", p. 189.

⁶⁸ Cf. Gen. 4:10; Job 16:18; Isa. 26:21; Ezek. 24:7-8; Joel 3:19; Lam. 4:13. Asmp. M. 9:6-7 states: "Let us die rather than trespass commands, for if we do this and die, our blood shall be avenged before the Lord". In Enoch 47:1-4, the prayers and blood of the righteous ascend to the Lord; the prayers are heard and the blood is required. M. *Sanh.* 6:5 records the words of R. Meir: "If God is sore troubled at the blood of the ungodly that is shed, how much more at the blood of

reference to Abel and Zechariah may have been intended to span the entire history of Israel's disobedience as the first and last martyrs of the Hebrew scriptures.⁶⁹ The idea comes off best in English:

the righteous?'. Cf. also Rev. 18:24. For the belief that God himself would require blood, cf. Exod. 20:5; 34:7; Num. 14:18; Deut. 5:9. Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 30, recognized that the crucifixion of Jesus and the persecution of the righteous by the fathers and this generation were both viewed under this aspect of divine requital for the shedding of innocent blood.

⁶⁹ Cf. Gen. 4:10 (cf. Heb. 11:4; 12:24; 1 Jn. 3:12) and II Chron. 24:20-22. This theory assumes that II Chron. was last in the Hebrew canon, however, cf. the counter-arguments of George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, The Age of the Tannaim*, I:319, n. 2; and J. Spencer Kennard, "The Lament Over Jerusalem: A Restudy of the Zacharias Passage", *ATR*, XXIX:174, 1947.

Matthew further specifies Zechariah as υἱοῦ βαπαχίου while Luke simply refers to Zechariah. This creates a problem. Matthew may be referring to the minor prophet who is identified in Zech. 1:1, 7 as τὸν τοῦ βαπαχίου υἱὸν Ἀδδω. Zechariah is near the end of the canon, but no tradition exists that he was murdered—nothing is known of his death. It is possible that Matthew or his source confused this Zechariah with the priest, Zechariah, the son of Jehoida, in II Chron. 24:20ff.; because the prophet would have been better known and the details of 23:35 seem to conform to the details of the murder of this priest, Zechariah. Another option is that Matthew is referring to Zechariah the son of βάπεις (other mss. have βαπισχάτου or βαποῦχου), mentioned by Josephus, *Bell.* IV:334-344, who was murdered by Zealots prior to the fall of Jerusalem. The reference in 23:35 would have, thus, become a prophecy *ex eventu*. Steck, *Israel*, pp. 33-40, has vigorously argued for this identification of Zechariah (as have others before him, cf. Wellhausen, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*, pp. 118-123; Edward Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, I:235; Kennard, "Lament", pp. 176-178; cf. also, Rudolf Meyer, *Der Prophet aus Galiläa*, pp. 48-49). The argument is based contextually on the passage's emphasis that final retribution was to descend upon those who had accumulated guilt from the beginning of time with the martyrdom of Abel. "This generation" had reached the denouement. If Zechariah is a reference to a remote Old Testament figure, then a substantial time lag exists from the death of this last martyr to the era of "this generation" which now would somehow make full the measure. Steck contended that Matthew sought to make the reference more contemporary by identifying Zechariah with the martyr in the Jewish war, who, according to Josephus, was slain ἐν μέσῳ τῷ ἔρῳ. This would explain also Matthew's use of the second person plural, "you murdered", which could not literally apply in the case of an Old Testament prophet. "This generation" could then be held accountable for the recent murder of a Zechariah shortly before the disastrous events which ensued.

However, against the identification of the Zechariah of Mt. 23:35 with the Zechariah murdered by Zealots is the fact that this change would have been transparently anachronistic on the lips of Jesus; and it is unlikely that Matthew would have been guilty of such a blatant breach in the point of view. There also exists the discrepancy between βαπαχίου in Mt. 23:35 and βάπεις, βαπισχάτου, or βαποῦχου in the different manuscripts of Josephus, which cannot be lightly dismissed, particularly when the father of the Old Testament prophet was indeed βαπαχίου (Zech. 1:1). The natural interpretation would be to view Mt. 23:35 as a reference to Zech. 1:1, however mistaken. Furthermore, the Zechariah mentioned by Josephus was killed at a tribunal set up

all the martyrs, from A to Z. However, the deaths of both Abel and Zechariah are closely parallel and are particularly appropriate to the context since in each case their blood cried out for vengeance. This would seem to be the key to the original conjunction of these

in the Temple fortress; and because it is unlikely that he was either a prophet or a priest (he is identified by Josephus only as a wealthy, prominent citizen), it is improbable that he would have been killed in the court of the priests. Finally, even though this story may have been widely known, including by Matthew, it is unlikely that the redactor would have wanted to specify the last martyr as a prominent citizen of Jerusalem who was a victim of Zealot atrocities; because, as it has been interpreted above, it was Matthew's intention to identify the last martyrs as the emissaries of Jesus. Zechariah, son of Baris, hardly qualifies for this role.

Therefore, as attractive as this theory might be—for it would clinch the argument that Matthew considered the fall of Jerusalem as the result of the final judgment of God for the persecution of the messengers—the enigma of Mt. 23:35 is probably attributable to a simple confusion between Zechariah, the prophet, and Zechariah, the priest. This was not uncommon. The prophet was often identified as the son of Iddo, his grandfather, according to Zech. 1:1 [cf. Ezra 5:1, 5:14; Neh. 12:4, 16; Isa. 8:2 (LXX) and B. *Yom.* 39b]. According to C. C. Torrey in his edition of *The Lives of the Prophets*, the second Epiphanius recension has the proper biography of Zechariah, the son of Jehoida, forming the second half of the biography of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah. In Prot. Jas. 23:1-24, the Zechariah of Mt. 23:35 is confused with the father of John the Baptist. Confusion was therefore commonplace. Eberhard Nestle, "Über Zacharias in Matth 23", *ZNW*, VI:199, 1905, and later, Martin McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, p. 162, point conclusively to the example of the Palestinian Targum of Lam. 2:20, which undoubtedly intended II Chron. 24:20ff. to be understood:

Is it proper to kill in the Temple of the Lord a priest and a prophet as you killed Zechariah bar Iddo, the High Priest and the faithful prophet, in the Temple of the Lord on the day of Atonement because he admonished you not to do what was evil before the Lord?

It must be concluded that Mt. 23:35 represents this same kind of confusion about Zechariah, and it probably originated in the source. Luke, aware of the discrepancy, solved the problem by omitting "son of Barachiah". There was some concern over this apparent error by others. According to Jerome's commentary on Mt. 23:35, the Gospel of the Nazaraens wrote "son of Joiada" in place of "son of Barachias"; and later scribes attempted to correct the problem in the Matthean text.

Cf. further, John Chapman, "Zacharias, Slain Between the Temple and the Altar", *JTS*, XIII:398-410, 1912; Sheldon H. Blank, "The Death of Zechariah in Rabbinic Literature", *HUCA*, XII-XIII:327-346, 1937-1938; McNeile, *Matthew*, pp. 340-341; and Manson, *Sayings*, pp. 103-105.

On the variation in the designation of Zechariah's death—μεταξὺ τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου (Mt.), μεταξύ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ τοῦ οἴκου (Lk.), and ἐν αὐλῇ τοῦ οἴκου κυρίου [II Chron. 24:21 (LXX)]—see Eb. Nestle, "'Between the Temple and the Altar'", *ExpT*, XIII:562, 1902. He believed that ναός and οἶκος translates the Hebrew אֵלֶּיךָ and referred to Ezek. 8:16, Joel 2:17 and I Macc. 7:36. Cf. also Steck, *Israel*, pp. 31, n. 8 and 35, n. 2. However, the variation may be due to a deliberate Matthean alteration, see n. 117, below.

two martyrs.⁷⁰ Consequently, the main associations which would have been evoked by the reference to Abel and Zechariah would have been the idea of vengeance for bloodguilt; and this appears to be Matthew's own understanding of his source.

What is most important for understanding Matthew's perspective in 23:35 and this section of the discourse is the inclusion of πᾶν αἷμα δίκαιον in contrast with Luke, who seems to have retained the original phrase, τὸ αἷμα παντῶν προφητῶν.⁷¹ Matthew seemingly has only a negligible interest in the blood of prophets killed in a bygone era; he is more concerned with updating this statement to include the immediate past history of the Christian era. "Righteous blood" broadens the spectrum so that it easily can apply to the messengers sent by Jesus (23:34) and, more importantly, to the blood

⁷⁰ Cf. Gen. 4:10 and II Chron. 24:22. The Pal. Tg. of Gen. 4:10, as edited by Diez Macho, reads: "The voice of the blood of the multitude of the just that were to arise from Abel your brother is crying against you before me from the earth". The legend of Zechariah's dying words, "The Lord see and avenge", developed rather fantastically, as can be seen in the references listed by Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, I:940ff. For example, in Midr. Lam. Proem 23 it is said that when Nebuzaradan came upon the Temple the innocent blood of Zechariah (a priest, a prophet and a judge) began to seethe. When he asked what kind of blood this was, after an attempted deception, they relented and said: "He was a prophet who reproved us, so we rose against him and killed him and for several years now his blood has not stopped seething". Nebuzaradan vowed to appease the blood; but when they brought and killed the men of the Great and minor Sanhedrin, youths and maidens, school children and, finally, eighty thousand priestly novitiates, the blood of Zechariah continued to seethe. Nebuzaradan exclaimed: "Zechariah, Zechariah! All the choicest of them all?". As soon as he spoke thus it stopped. Thereupon he debated with himself to repent, saying, 'If such vengeance is exacted for one life, how much more will happen to me for taking so many lives!'

⁷¹ Cf. Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 158; Steck, *Israel*, p. 31, n. 8; Suggs, *Wisdom*, p. 15; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 123; Schulz, *Q*, p. 337. Against McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 339, who claimed Matthew's phrase was more Hebraic (cf. Ps. 106:38; Prov. 6:17; Joel 3:19; Jon. 1:14); and van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 68. Cf. Rev. 18:24. The insertion of "righteous" four times in 23:28, 29 and 35 without a Lucan parallel is surely redactional. David Hill, "ΔΙΚΑΙΟΙ as a Quasi-Technical Term", *NTS*, XI:297-298, 1965, suggested that "righteous" possessed a special significance as a quasi-technical term (cf. Mt. 10:41; 13:17; and 23:29 where it is combined with prophets) and may refer to a witnessing or teaching function in the community. Cf. also J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul*, pp. 138-139, who claimed that "righteous" in Mt. 23:35 referred not just to pious, covenant-keeping folk, but to the martyred teachers of Israel who now have Christian counterparts. This may be true, but the word may simply be synonymous with "innocent", so Donald P. Senior, *The Passion Narrative according to Matthew: A Redactional Study*, p. 257.

of Jesus Messiah, son of God.⁷² This interpretation is commended by the continuation of this theme in chap. 27 where Judas laments, "I have sinned, betraying righteous blood" (the reading δικαίον instead of ἁθῶν is a strong possibility on internal grounds even though the external evidence is less strong). In 27:24, Pilate washes his hands of responsibility for "the blood of this righteous man" (reading τοῦ δικαίου τούτου, again, on internal grounds and with stronger external support). It is probable that in 23:34 Matthew was foreshadowing his assignment of the blame for Jesus' death to "this generation".

That this was Matthew's intention is supported by the introductory phrase of 23:35, ὅπως ἔλθῃ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς, which undoubtedly foreshadows the ominous cry of the people in 27:25 that is without a synoptic parallel: τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν.⁷³ The theme of chap. 27 is "innocent blood".⁷⁴ Judas attempts to divest himself of responsibility for Jesus' blood before the priests, but their response in 27:4, "What is it to us?" implicates them also. In 27:24-25, Senior has noted that the response of the people provides the counterpoint to Pilate's declaration of innocence.⁷⁵ The Gentile proclaims his innocence, and Israel accepts responsibility.⁷⁶ The incident in 27:24-25, thus, has been augured by Matthew's composition of 23:35 as he intended that the blame for the innocent blood be attributed

⁷² Cf. Steck, *Israel*, p. 31, n. 8, against Schulz, *Q*, p. 137, who contended that "all righteous blood" was inserted by Matthew to avoid the problem in Lk. 11:50 that neither Abel nor Zechariah were prophets. However, this would not have entered Matthew's mind if it is true that it was widely presumed that all prophets were martyrs and all martyrs, prophets.

⁷³ Luke's expression, ἐκζητέομαι, in 11:50 corresponds to an Old Testament background (cf. Gen. 9:5; 42:22; Ezek. 33:6; Ps. 13:13; Joel 4:21 and II Chron. 24:22) and is probably original to Q since II Chron. 24:22, where the word occurs in the LXX, is the source. Cf. Steck, *Israel*, p. 31, n. 8; Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, p. 92; van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 66; and Chapman, "Zacharias", pp. 407-408.

⁷⁴ Senior, *Passion Narrative*, p. 256.

⁷⁵ Ibid. Hans Kosmala, "'His Blood On Us and Our Children' (The Background of Mat. 27, 24-25)", *ASTI*, VII:115, contended that Pilate's declaration in 27:24 was the necessary prelude to the people's cry: "The people's demand means that if Pilate would only consent to the crucifixion of Jesus, the people together with their leaders would take over the responsibility for Pilate's judgment. After this demonstration of the people's will Pilate gives up further negotiations with them". Cf. Nils Dahl, "Die Passionsgeschichte bei Matthäus", *NTS*, II:28-29, 1955-1956.

⁷⁶ For the Old Testament and Rabbinic background of this phrase, cf. Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I:1033; McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 413; Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, pp. 385-386; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 77; Strecker, *Der Weg*, pp. 115-116. Cf. Acts 5:28 and 18:6. For the evidence that the phrase is Matthean, cf. Senior, *Passion Narrative*, pp. 258-261.

to "this generation" (23:36). "This generation" is a concept taken up from Mark (8:12, 38; 13:30; 9:19);⁷⁷ and because of the overt emphasis upon "you" in this section, the scribes and Pharisees must be intended. Yet it cannot be simply limited to them. They are the embodiment of the leaders of an apostate Israel; but for Matthew, "this generation" applies to those who rejected Jesus, as well as John (cf. 7:31 and 11:16), and later, the envoys of Jesus.⁷⁸ "This gener-

⁷⁷ Alexander Sand, *Das Gesetz und die Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Evangeliums nach Matthäus*, p. 92.

⁷⁸ Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p. 235, interpreted Mt. 23:36, ἡ γενεὰ ταύτη, to mean this "kind" of generation. van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, p. 67, believed 23:36 was confined to the leaders of Israel who were beyond redemption. McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 157, and Pierre Bonnard, *L'Évangile selon Saint Matthieu*, p. 342, thought it referred to the unbelieving Jews of contemporary Judaism. Walker, *Heilsgeschichte*, pp. 35-38, and Schweizer, *Matthew*, pp. 444 and 458, saw an emphasis on the solidarity of sin which spanned all the generations that reject Jesus.

In Matthew's gospel, "this generation" is primarily characterized by its failure to acknowledge the inbreaking of the kingdom of heaven and the fulfillment of the prophecies in Jesus' person (11:4-5). The reference to the γενεὰ ἀπιστος καὶ διεστραμμένη in 17:17 (cf. Mk. 9:19) is applied to the disciples. The disciples cannot be included in "this generation", but Matthew clarifies that the parallel between "this generation" and the disciples is the lack of faith (ἀπιστος). Matthew alone explains the failure of the disciples in casting out the demon of the epileptic boy because they had "little faith" (17:20). "This generation" is likened by Jesus to petulant children (11:7-19). On the one hand, they complained about John's ascetic ways; and, on the other, they were offended by Jesus' freedom. They refused to see that John was more than a prophet (11:9) and that Jesus is the son of man (11:19). Their spiritual condition has progressed from bad to worse (12:45). "This generation" is therefore described as evil (12:39, 45; 16:4) and adulterous (12:39; 16:4). This is because they wished to see more conclusive signs, yet they already had in their midst something more than the Ninevites and the Queen of the South who both repented (12:38-42). Their problem is that they wantonly failed to interpret the signs of the times (16:1-4) which, from the perspective of the hearers of Matthew, means that they will not acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, the son of God. "This generation" is therefore defined as those who will not believe and who put God's messengers to death (23:34-38). They will kill Jesus.

The identity of "this generation" may not be equated simply with the "scribes and Pharisees" (12:38); the Sadducees, the other representatives of official Judaism, must also be included (16:1). But contextually it must also extend to the crowds (11:7) and the unrepentant cities (11:20). Therefore, Kingsbury, in his Proclamation Commentary, *Matthew*, p. 73, is correct when he sees that in Matthew's eyes "the whole of Israel proves itself to be 'an evil and adulterous generation' ... which refuses to repent and receive the kingdom of heaven". In consequence, "this generation" stands condemned in Matthew's gospel. At the judgment, supposedly more infamous generations, Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom (11:22-24), the men of Nineveh and the Queen of the South, will rise up to condemn "this generation", guilty of the blood of the prophets, Jesus, and his messengers. This condemnation is proleptically and symbolically signified in 16:4c. When they refused to see, "he left them and departed" (cf. 24:1-2).

Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 79, contended that the background of 23:36 was

ation", therefore, represents Israel at the point when its guilt had finally reached the full mark with the rejection of God's last messengers and when God's judgment finally descended, as concretely manifested in the destruction of Jerusalem.⁷⁹ It is guilty of building the graves of the prophets and putting them in their graves. They also are guilty of the innocent blood of Jesus and his messengers, and blood guilt is directly associated with affliction.⁸⁰

MATTHEW 23:37-39

The Setting of Matthew 23:37-39

The lament over Jerusalem appears in an altogether different context in Luke 13:34-35 from that of its Matthean parallel in 23:37-39.⁸¹

the belief that the Jews were always a perverse generation, but above all, the ones who killed the Messiah. (Cf. Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 55; John A. T. Robinson, *Jesus and His Coming: The Emergence of a Doctrine*, pp. 84-85; Willi Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist*, p. 200, n. 179; and Green, *Matthew*, p. 194).

⁷⁹ Assuming that Zechariah, the priest, and Zechariah, the prophet, have been telescoped into one identity, a martyred prophet, another nuance may have come to the redactor's mind with the mention of Zechariah. This prophet was associated with prophecies about the end of the nations, Israel and the Temple (cf. *The Lives of the Prophets*. The correlation was known to R. Joḥanan b. Zakkai. It is recorded that he acknowledged the mysterious phenomenon of the sanctuary doors opening by themselves as an omen of the Temple's destruction. He is said to have rebuked them:

Hekal, Hekal, why wilt thou be the alarmer thyself? I know about thee that thou wilt be destroyed, for Zechariah ben Iddo has already prophesied concerning thee: 'Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars' (B. *Yom.* 39b).

⁸⁰ For example, T. Neof. Gen. 43:21-22 has the brothers of Joseph say in despair: "We are guilty of the blood of our brother... Therefore this great affliction has come upon us". Reuben says, "Did I not say do not sin against this boy... And behold his blood is also required". Cf. T. Neof. Num. 35:19, 21, 27; Tg. Isa. 59:2-3; and Sib. Or. 3:311-313.

⁸¹ Matthew and Luke have derived the lament from the same written source. Only slight differences in wording appear. They both retain the solecistic changes from the second person to the third and back to the second, which C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, p. 180, judged to be a reflection of a Semitic tendency. Most important is the fact that only here does Matthew employ the Aramaic spelling, Ἱεροουσαλὴμ; everywhere else he uses the form Ἱεροσόλυμα (Cf. 2:1, 3; 3:5; 4:25; 5:35; 15:1; 15:21; 20:17, 18; and 21:10). Also, ὄν τρόπον occurs only here in Matthew's and Luke's gospels (cf. Acts 1:11, 7:28, 15:11, 27:25).

As for the variations, Matthew has the 2 aorist infinitive form, ἐπισυναγαγεῖν; while Luke has the 1 aorist, ἐπισυνάξει. Luke, perhaps, represents the tendency in Koine to change the Attic aorist to a sigmatic one (possibly under LXX influence, cf. Blass, Debrunner, Funk, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, §75). Steck, *Israel*, p. 48, believed that Matthew redacted the passage. Matthew has the phrase ἐπισυνάγει τὰ νοσσία αὐτῆς. Luke does not repeat the verb and has a less common

This circumstance allows two viable explanations: one of the gospels has preserved the original setting of the saying in the common *Vorlage* while the other has placed it in a different framework; or, the logion was passed on without any setting as an independent *Traditionsstück*, and its placement in both gospels is ascribable to the respective purposes of the editors. This difficult source-critical problem will now be addressed.

Many of those who have contended with this puzzle have concluded that the setting of Matthew 23:37-39 is not attributable to the editorial suturing of two separate sayings (23:34-36 and 37-39) but simply is a preservation of the original order in Q.⁸² Two basic arguments have been offered to support this view. First, the ostensible artificiality of the Lucan context of 13:34-35 is appealed to as a negative argument which betokens the primacy of Matthew's setting. Second, it is argued that 23:37-38 (39) were originally a portion of a Wisdom saying and, therefore, would have been naturally linked to vv. 34-35 (36), which also have been attributed to Wisdom (cf. Lk. 11:49).⁸³ Both of these arguments for the concurrence between the Matthean sequence and that of Q need to be analyzed.

idiom with the indirect reflexive, τῇν ἑαυτῆς νοσσίαν (D reads αὐτῆς). Steck has made something of the fact that Luke uses the collective noun, νοσσιά, "nest", or "brood" (cf. Bauer, *Lexicon*, p. 545), as opposed to νοσσίον, the individual young of a bird (cf. pp. 49-50). He interpreted this to be a deliberate change by Matthew. Luke's version is claimed to preserve the original pre-Christian Wisdom imagery because it depicts the brood as already situated in the nest under the mother bird's sheltering wings (cf. Deut. 32:11). This, Steck believed, corresponds to the picture of Wisdom as abiding in Jerusalem and offering refuge; and he cited Sir. 1:15 as a parallel. But, like young birds which do not want to remain in the nest under the protecting wings of the mother bird, Israel does not wish to remain under the protecting shelter of Wisdom, that is, adhere to the Law (p. 234). Matthew's picture, on the other hand, is that of young birds which are already outside of the nest and flying on their own. They need to be collected for their protection (cf. Prov. 27:8). Steck thought that Matthew changed this picture in order to correspond to the ideas in 23:34-36 (p. 293). This is a clever analysis, but see the criticism by Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, pp. 171-172.

The variations between 23:39 and 13:35, Matthew's γάρ and ἀν' ἄρτι and Luke's δέ(?) and ἤξει ὅτε(?) will be dealt with below.

⁸² Cf. the various arguments of Harnack, *Sayings*, p. 169; Michael, "Lament", pp. 102-103; B. W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew*, pp. 247-248; Bultmann, *History*, pp. 114-115; T. F. Glasson, *The Second Advent*, p. 99; F. W. Beare, *The Earliest Records of Jesus*, p. 175; Lohse, "Σιών", p. 329, n. 325; Wilckens, "σοφία", p. 515; Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 287; Suggs, *Wisdom*, pp. 64-66; Lührmann, *Logienquelle*, pp. 45, 48; Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 436. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, p. 245, allowed that it is possible.

⁸³ See above, pp. 172-174.

Attention must first be focused on the alleged artificiality of the Lucan setting of the lament which has suggested some measure of tampering by a redactor. It has often been noted that the lament is more of an integral part of the context in Matthew than it is in Luke. At least, in Matthew, the lament over Jerusalem (and its house) takes place in the Jerusalem Temple and after bitter confrontations with the Jewish leaders have conspicuously unveiled the obduracy which is the subject of the complaint. Verses 37-39 thus form a fitting climax not only to the denunciations of chap. 23 but also to the march of events that began with Jesus' entry into the city in chap. 21. The Lucan position of the logion is by no means quite as well-pointed. Within the chronological framework of Luke—which at this point is rather confused—Jesus had set his face toward Jerusalem (9:51) but had never ministered there; yet he is portrayed as pleading with the city as if he had made frequent visits: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often would I have gathered your children together...". Not only does this seem to be an unsuitable remark to make at the conclusion of a Galilean ministry, it assumes, when taken literally, many trips to Jerusalem before he had actually stepped foot in the city. But as misplaced as the saying seems in this context, it would have been even less apt had this lament been uttered in the home of a (Galilean?) Pharisee as part of the denunciation of "the lawyers" (11:46, 52). Had 13:34-35 originally been connected to 11:49-51, the Lucan setting of the woes⁸⁴ would have probably inclined the redactor to sever the lament from the series of woes and move it to a more suitable point later in the narrative.

The setting of the lament in 13:34-35 also exhibits traces of Luke's redactional handiwork because of the theological utility of the saying at this juncture in his gospel. Following Jesus' announcement in 13:33 that he must continue on his way toward Jerusalem ("for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem"); the words "you will not see me until you say 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'" can only anticipate the acclamation of the people at the triumphal entry into the city (19:38), which then becomes the fulfillment of this saying. Since these words are recorded after Jesus' entry in Matthew's schema they can only refer to some far distant event—presumably the parousia.⁸⁵ In contrast, the lament in

⁸⁴ On the Lucan setting of the woes, see above, pp. 93-94.

⁸⁵ For the discussion of this, see below, pp. 204-209.

Luke sets the tone for the rest of the journey to Jerusalem.⁸⁶ If Luke and Matthew have used the same source and if Luke has wrenched vv. 34-35 from an original context and placed them in this apparently artificial one, then this leaves the implication that the original order in Q has been preserved by Matthew 23:34-39.

The second argument for the priority of the Matthean context of these verses is based upon the estimation that vv. 37-38 (39) had to do with Wisdom either as a continuation of the quotation from a lost Wisdom apocalypse⁸⁷ or as an independent Wisdom saying which had been previously linked to the Wisdom saying in vv. 34-36.⁸⁸ The same key words in 23:34, ἀποστέλλω, προφηται, and ἀποκτείνω, recur in 23:37, which might suggest a natural integration of the two sayings.⁸⁹ It is also argued that the imagery in v. 37 of one who sent prophets down through the ages who were repeatedly rejected requires a transhistorical divine being as the subject.⁹⁰ From this

⁸⁶ Most of those who consider the Lucan context to be redactional believe that the saying is connected to the Entry as a prophecy of the acclamation of the crowd at Jesus' entry into the city (cf. Lk. 19:38). If this is the case, it seems to be a rather unimaginative application of the saying by Luke. Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, p. 110, maintained that the logion reveals the typological meaning that the Entry has for Luke; it was joined to 13:31-33 in order to reinforce the idea that a prophet must die in Jerusalem (p. 133, but see the contradictory statement on p. 75, n. 4). Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 151, stated:

Das Jerusalemwort hat bei Lk in erster Linie die Funktion einer Illustration für den prophetenmörderischen Charakter Jerusalems, vgl. Lk 13, 33! Der Skopus des Logions ist bei Lk der Tod Jesu in der botenmordenden Stadt (vgl. Ap 7, 52ff.).

Cf. also Lührmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 45.

⁸⁷ So Harnack, *Sayings*, p. 169; Michael, "Lament", p. 102; Bultmann, *History*, p. 115; Bacon, *Studies*, pp. 247-248; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 287. Michael points out that this view originated with Strauss in his *Life of Jesus*.

⁸⁸ Meyer, *Der Prophet*, p. 50; and Wilckens, "σοφία", p. 515. Suggs, *Wisdom*, pp. 64-66.

⁸⁹ Lührmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 48, wrote: "So ist mir doch, auch wenn sich keine vollständige Sicherheit erzielen lässt, am wahrscheinlichsten, dass Lk 13, 34f./Mt 23, 37-39 in Q auf das Gerichtswort Lk 11, 49-51/Mt 23, 34-36 folgte, zumal es, da keine Verankerung in einem anderen Q-Kontext dagegen spricht, verwundlich wäre, wenn zwei nach Charakter und Inhalt so ähnliche Worte getrennt voneinander gestanden hätten".

⁹⁰ Many have considered the adverb ποσάκις to be more appropriate if Wisdom is understood as the subject; since it could look back over the centuries on the fate of the prophets while Jesus, who was purportedly making his first visit to Jerusalem, could not do this in the same way. The feminine gender of Wisdom in both Greek and Hebrew would also favor its identification with a mother bird sheltering her young. Cf. Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, pp. 138-141; and Schweizer, *Matthew*, pp. 336-337.

The imagery of sheltering wings also suggests a transhistorical being as the subject. The phrase "wings of God" is common in the Old Testament (cf. Deut. 32:11;

bit of conjecture the Wisdom connection is brought in. Bultmann stated that "the whole verse has to be understood in the light of the myth of divine Wisdom, in which Wisdom dwells on the earth and calls men to follow her in vain, then leaves the world, so that now man searches for her in vain".⁹¹ Because the saying from this perspective cannot be easily applied to Jesus and because the two sayings in vv. 34-36 and vv. 37-39 seem to have some common link with Wisdom oracles, it has seemed justified by many to assume that Matthew has preserved their original combination.

But these arguments are at best conjectural and cannot be considered conclusive. As a negative argument, the supposed artificiality of the

Ruth 2:11; Pss. 17:8, 36:7, 57:1, 61:4, 63:7, 91:4; Isa. 31:5; II Apoc. Bar. 41:3-4). One also finds references to "the wings of the cherubim" but will search in vain for the imagery of the sheltering wings of Wisdom. For some references to the phrase "the wings of the *Shekinah*" in Rabbinic literature, see Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I:931. This image has a quite different focus, however, and is normally employed for describing the conversion of proselytes, an application that is undoubtedly derived from Ruth 2:12. On the interpretation of the significance of the *Shekinah* in Rabbinic literature, see George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, I:434-438; and Urbach, *The Sages*, pp. 35-65. Urbach concluded and stressed that there is no connection between the Rabbinic ideology of the *Shekinah* with Wisdom (pp. 64-65). This would challenge the casual identification of the two by some scholars; see, for example, Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 142; and H. Jaeger, "The Patristic Conception of Wisdom in the Light of Biblical and Rabbinical Research", *Studia Patristica*, IV:90-106 (TU, 79), 1961.

⁹¹ Bultmann, *History*, p. 115; cf. also Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 56; Meyer, *Prophet*, p. 50; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 289; Wilckens, "σοφία", p. 515; Steck, *Israel*, pp. 231-232; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, pp. 138, 142-145; Suggs, *Wisdom*, pp. 66-67; Schweizer, *Matthew*, pp. 436, 446-447; and Robinson, "Jesus as Sophos", pp. 11-13.

The basic outline of the myth is derived from various passages (cf. Prov. 1:20, 24, 28; 8:1; Sir. 1 and 24; Bar. 3:37-4:4; II Esd. 5:9; En. 42:1-2; 93:8; 94:5; and II Apoc. Bar. 48:33, 36). Wisdom comes down from heaven preaching and seeking a home in Jerusalem. When her wooing is rejected, she withdraws. Christ, p. 144, recognized that a firm parallel to Mt. 23:37-39 cannot be found in any one Wisdom text; but he concluded that a Wisdom myth did underlie this tradition:

...dass kein direkter Einfluss des Ab- und Aufstiegsmythos bemerkbar ist. Hinter dem Jerusalemwort steht kein fester, einheitlicher Mythos, sondern der ganze (allerdings mannigfach mythisch beeinflusste) vielfältige Vorstellungskomplex der Weisheitstradition, wie sie nach und nach gewachsen ist. Gar eine Einwirkung bestimmter Texte ist nicht erkennbar. Immerhin schimmert am stärksten durch, insofern alle Elemente beieinander auftauchen: der Abstieg (37), die Ablehnung (37) und der Aufstieg (39f.).

It is also significant for this understanding of the background of the logion that it comes from Q, which according to James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester, in *Trajectories through Early Christianity*, pp. 71-113, took the form of Wisdom literature.

Lucan setting for the lament is not sufficient grounds for inferring that Matthew has preserved the original interconnection of vv. 34-36 and 37-39. It is imaginable that the lament may have been passed on in the tradition without a definite setting and its location in the framework of both gospels is redactional.⁹² This is a viable alternative which can never be ruled out, but scattered oral or written traditions are often too ready a solution to explain difficult variants. We have assumed throughout that Matthew and Luke have utilized a similar source in the composition of their woe discourses and have seen that variations were ascribable to each Evangelist's redactional changes. Therefore a solution to our problem will again be sought on the basis of this assumption.

Immediately we are faced with a curious circumstance if the lament stood in the same position in Q as it does in Matthew, and Luke removed it from that context and placed it in another place in his narrative. This would have required on Luke's part an overt and radical reinterpretation of the meaning of the logion by changing it from Jesus' final public word to the nation of Israel, as it is in Matthew, to a preparation for his entry into Jerusalem,⁹³ or to a reinforcement of the concept that Jerusalem was the place where prophets must die, expressed in 13:33.⁹⁴ This fact would cast doubt on the hypothesis that Luke has uprooted the lament from its original environs, which is preserved by Matthew, and by all accounts is the most effective context, and has relegated it to a setting which is patently artificial; because it means that Luke altered the original thrust of the lament with what can only be described as singularly inept results. This would also go against Luke's normal pattern of his utilization of sources. Kümmel appealed to the evidence that Luke was not given to tearing passages apart that were united in his sources.⁹⁵

⁹² Cf. Allen, *Matthew*, p. 251; McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 341; Steck, *Israel*, p. 48; McKenzie, "Matthew", p. 104; Hill, *Matthew*, p. 315; Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, pp. 172-173; A. Denaux, "L'hypocrisie des Pharisiens et le dessein de Dieu: Analyse de Lc., XIII, 31-33", *L'Évangile de Luc: Problèmes littéraires et théologiques*, pp. 246-247. Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 113, allowed this as a possibility; see also Schulz, *Q*, p. 347, n. 184.

⁹³ So Hare, *Persecution*, p. 95.

⁹⁴ Cf. Conzelmann, *Luke*, p. 133.

⁹⁵ Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 80. See his discussion of Luke's use of his sources in *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 69 (cf. the 1st English edition, p. 54, where he cited particularly the work of Vincent Taylor). Manson, *Sayings*, p. 102, argued that: "If Lk. 11:51 marked the end of a block of Q material in Lk. and

These doubts cause one to look for other solutions. Attention has largely focused on the artificiality of Luke 13:34-35 as an addendum to vv. 31-33, but viewing 13:31-33 as the editorial insertion⁹⁶ puts the problem into an entirely new perspective.⁹⁷ Verses 31-33 clearly reflect the redactional interests of Luke,⁹⁸ and it may be argued that its placement in this context is just as artificial as vv. 34-35. If vv. 31-33 are removed, vv. 34-35 are very apt as a conclusion to what precedes.⁹⁹ Therefore, a strong case can be made for the hypothesis that vv. 23-35 were a contiguous unit in Luke's source into which he spliced vv. 31-33¹⁰⁰ and from which Matthew quarried material which he has

Lk. 13:34 the beginning of the next block for Q, there would be something to be said for the theory [that 11:51 and 13:34-35 were originally combined as a quotation]; but that is not the case". Suggs, *Wisdom*, p. 65, n. 7, has countered that one way or another Luke has not "preserved the sequence of his source in this section".

⁹⁶ Beare, *Earliest Records*, p. 175, claimed that Lk. 13:34-35 "owes its place wholly to the verbal association ('Jerusalem') with v. 33". This represents a widespread opinion that neglects the fact that *Stichwort* association could go either way. Verses 31-33 could have been added to vv. 34-35 as easily as vice versa. The recognition of verbal and thematic associations does not answer the question of which of the sayings was joined to the other.

⁹⁷ Cf. Emanuel Hirsch, *Frühgeschichte des Evangeliums*, II:132-133; John Pairman Brown, "The Form of 'Q' Known to Matthew", *NTS*, VII:35, n. 1, 1961-1962; Helmut Flender, *St. Luke: Theologian of Redemptive History*, p. 110; and Hare, *Persecution*, p. 95.

⁹⁸ Cf. Conzelmann, *Luke*, pp. 65, 68, 133-134, 139. See also the work by Steck, *Israel*, pp. 40-45, and A. Denaux, "L'Hypocrisie des Pharisiens", pp. 245-285, on this passage.

⁹⁹ Cf. those scholars cited above in n. 97.

In 13:23, Jesus is asked the question, "Will those who are saved be few?". His answer is an indirect "yes"—"Many will seek to enter and will not be able" (13:24). This theme continues, with a notable emphasis on the second person, in the parable of the householder: "You will begin to stand outside and to knock at the door". But the answer will be, "I do not know where you come from, Depart!". These ominous words are followed in 13:28 with a reference to weeping and gnashing of teeth "when you shall see (ὄψεσθε) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast out" (ὁμᾶς δὲ ἐκβαλλομένους ἔξω). The whole thrust of the section portrays the rejection of the people who refused to repent (13:5) and poses the "unthinkable" suggestion that Israel may not be the honored guests at the Messianic banquet. On the contrary, those of Israel who are disobedient will be excluded and left to despair as Gentiles take their places. The lament over Jerusalem therefore comprises an apt and significant conclusion to the theme of rejection, which permeates the preceding verses, when 13:31-33 are omitted.

¹⁰⁰ As Knox, *Sources*, II:81, pointed out, vv. 31-33 belong earlier in the Galilean ministry. The warning would be more appropriate at a time when Jesus was supposedly not leaving Herod's jurisdiction as he is just about to do (cf. 9:7).

Flender, *St. Luke*, pp. 110-111, perceived a theological reason behind Luke's insertion of vv. 31-33 in this context which is worth quoting:

edited and deployed at various points in his gospel,¹⁰¹ including the lament, which he inserted after 23:35-36.¹⁰² This conclusion is also conjectural, but it offers a plausible alternative explanation for the placement of Matthew 23:37-39. Its original setting is to be found in Luke and its location in Matthew is attributable to the Evangelist's deliberate manipulation.

Before this interpretation can be accepted as the best alternative we must return to the question of the original combination of Matthew 23:34-39 as a possible quotation from a lost Wisdom apocalypse quoted by Jesus or by an early Christian prophet in his name. The uniform theme of the rejection and slaughter of the divine messengers may reflect an antecedent union of the two sayings. On the other hand, it may also have prompted the redactor to

If vv. 34f. come after vv. 29, 30, the latter must refer to the Jews only. But that is just what Luke wants to avoid. It explains why he inserts vv. 31-3, the Pharisee's warning to Jesus to beware of Herod. This interrupts Jesus' discourse. After he has read the saying about Jerusalem's guilt in putting Jesus to death (v. 33), the reader no longer thinks that vv. 34f. are addressed to himself. Thus the warning directly expressed in vv. 23ff. is underlined. The destruction of Jerusalem, which the reader knows all about, serves as a dire warning. Thus these anti-Jewish sayings become doubly relevant. They serve as a direct warning to the Church in Luke's own day. And indirectly, they set an example of the way in which the judgments of God are accomplished.

¹⁰¹ The section of material in Luke from 13:10 on has been identified by Knox, *Sources*, II:78 and 83, as a miscellaneous collection of fragments. Matthew has much of this material scattered about at different points in his gospel. Knox attributes the differences in wording to Matthew's "drastic abbreviation" (II:79). It seems likely that Matthew broke up a collection of miscellaneous fragments, abbreviated them, and inserted them at points he judged to be appropriate in his gospel rather than that Luke collected these miscellaneous fragments in order to form a unit. Therefore, we conclude that Matthew rewrote what is found in Lk. 13:24 and transferred it to Mt. 7:13-14; Lk. 13:25-26 to Mt. 7:22; Lk. 13:28 to Mt. 8:11-12; and Lk. 13:30 to Mt. 19:30 (cf. Mk. 10:31).

¹⁰² Those who believe, for various reasons, that the setting of the lament in Matthew's gospel is due to his redaction are: Margarete Plath, "Der neutestamentliche Weheruf über Jerusalem (Luk. 13, 34-35 – Matth. 23, 37-39)", *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, LXXVIII:457, 1905; B. H. Streeter, "On the Original Order of Q", *Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, p. 162; Allen, *Matthew*, p. 257; McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 341; Hirsch, *Frühgeschichte*, II:107, 132, 187; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 56; Knox, *Sources*, II:82-83; Conzlemann, *Luke*, p. 110; W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 298; Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 158; Steck, *Israel*, pp. 45-48, 56, 237, 283, n. 1, 290, n. 6; Hare, *Persecution*, p. 95; McKenzie, "Matthew", p. 104; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 136; Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 172.

The entire chapter has been found in this study to be a montage and this would incline us to believe that the dramatic conclusion in vv. 37-39 was also due to Matthew's editorial genius.

insert the lament at this point. Against the original union of vv. 34-36 and 37-39 is the evidence of a perceptible seam. The point of view in the two sayings is different: in vv. 34-36, the speaker looks forward to the future sending of "prophets, wisemen and scribes"; in vv. 37-39, he looks back on the "prophets" who have been sent over a period of time.¹⁰³ Also, the address in both sayings is different. Verse 34 is part of the woe against the scribes and Pharisees (Lk. 13:49, the lawyers), while v. 37 is addressed to Jerusalem. The place from which the words are uttered also differs. It is assumed that the Wisdom of God (Lk. 11:49) is in some extra-terrestrial abode sending out emissaries, whereas in v. 37 the speaker is in or near Jerusalem.¹⁰⁴ The emotional tone of the two sayings conflicts as well. The first seems to give vent to an almost zealous anger; while the second evinces an undertone of sorrow,¹⁰⁵ an emotion that is unmistakable in the Lucan context. Similarly, an aspect of active revenge is suggested in vv. 34-36, but the lament in vv. 37-39 implies more of a passive abandonment.¹⁰⁶ As a result of these disparities between the two sayings, it seems that Steck is correct when he accused most of the scholars who have argued for the pre-Christian connection of 23:34-38 of basing their arguments on *vorstellungsgeschichtliche* grounds rather than on a careful analysis of content.¹⁰⁷ They have considered the sayings to be of a piece because of the supposed connection to a Wisdom tradition, but it is by no means certain that vv. 37-39

¹⁰³ Cf. Plath, "Weherufe", p. 457; Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", p. 56; and Steck, *Israel*, p. 47. Suggs, *Wisdom*, p. 65, argued against Haenchen that vv. 34-36 are a doom oracle, requiring a future tense, while vv. 37-39 are a dirge, requiring a past tense. However, the mixture of these two forms would seem to tell against their original combination. It should also be noted that vv. 34-36 are prosaic while vv. 37-38 are more poetic. Cf. C. F. Burney, *The Poetry of Our Lord*, p. 146, and Manson, *Sayings*, p. 126.

¹⁰⁴ Steck, *Israel*, p. 231.

¹⁰⁵ Plath, "Weheruf", p. 457; and Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p. 754.

¹⁰⁶ Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, p. 94.

¹⁰⁷ Steck, *Israel*, pp. 47-48. Manson, *Sayings*, p. 102, also observed that a verbal comparison of the two parallel passages in Matthew and Luke is "strongly against the theory" that they were originally combined. He noted that Mt. 23:34-36 contains 72 words and Lk. 11:49-51, 58 words. They agree in 22 words and partly in 7, which is less than 50 per cent. In the lament, Mt. 23:37-39 contains 56 words and Lk. 13:34-35, 53 words. There is agreement in 45 words and partial agreement in 4, nearly 90 per cent. Manson concluded:

It is difficult to believe that this wide divergence followed by almost word-for-word agreement could have taken place in the quotation of a single short passage of little more than a hundred words.

were originally attributed to Wisdom.¹⁰⁸ In both gospels it is Jesus who is identified as the speaker and there is no reason why Jesus—who saw his mission field as the lost sheep of the house of Israel—could not have utilized a traditional picture and applied it to himself. The Jerusalem lament, whatever its original Sitz im Leben, need not require any supra-historical entity to make sense.¹⁰⁹ It could have been spoken at any point in Jesus' ministry since he met with persistent opposition. Therefore, it is concluded that vv. 34-36 and 37-39 do not naturally cohere and they are to be viewed as independent pieces of tradition that have been joined together. It remains possible that this was done by the compiler of Q or by the redactor, Matthew.

Against the original combination of 23:34-37 and 37-39 in Q is the sequence of the woes in Luke 11. Assuming, as we have above, that Matthew and Luke used a common source for their respective discourses, one must assume that either Luke inserted 11:52 after 11:49-51 or that Matthew moved this woe from last in the source to first in his order (23:13).¹¹⁰ However, it does not seem likely that Luke placed this woe last because 11:52, "Woe to you lawyers! for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering", is particularly applicable as an accusation against the scribes (lawyers) in Luke's division of the charges.¹¹¹ Therefore, it would be the case that had the lament over Jerusalem (now 13:34-35) immediately followed

¹⁰⁸ The best parallel to Mt. 23:37-39, II Esd. 1:28-32, has "the Lord Almighty" (1:28) as the speaker, not Wisdom.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p. 237; Dodd, *Parables*, p. 109; Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment*, pp. 80-81; Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p. 343; Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, p. 94, n. 6; and Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, pp. 173-174.

Hoffmann has maintained that the present participles ἀποκτείνουσα and λιθοβολοῦσα characterize Jerusalem in a general way. With the aorist ἠθέλησα the speaker moves from the entire history of Jerusalem to his own encounter with the city. The ποσάκις need not refer to a wish dating back to the sending of the earliest prophets but may designate the speaker's repeated attempts to make the people repent. The passive participle ἀπεσταλμένους means that the speaker is not the sender but that he understood himself to be included among those messengers rejected by Jerusalem. It does not require a supra-historical being to reflect on Israel's guilt as Acts 7:51-53 and 1 Thess. 2:14-16 testify. Hoffmann concluded:

Der Sprecher bezieht sich also auf sie, weil er sein Geschick in Analogie zu dem der Propheten und Gesandten versteht, nicht aber, weil er als ein übergeschichtliches Subjekt sich mit dem Geschick der Propheten und Gesandten identifiziert.

¹¹⁰ See the discussion above, pp. 17-18.

¹¹¹ See above, pp. 41-42.

11:49-51 (about the persecution of the prophets) in the Q source, it would have made the woe in 11:52 an anticlimactic conclusion. It has been argued above that Matthew altered the original position of the logion in the *Vorlage* about shutting off access to the kingdom and that Luke has preserved it.¹¹² Since 11:52 provides such an excellent and natural conclusion of the Lucan woes, which the inclusion of the lament after 11:51 would have skewed, our judgment is that the lament was not initially connected to the woes.

If the argument to this point is cogent, then the location of the lament at the conclusion of Matthew's woe discourse is due to the editor; and this has obvious ramifications for understanding his intention in chap. 23. Coupled with the evidence of editorial work in the omission of the pericope of the widow's mite and in the wording of 24:1-2,¹¹³ the opinion that Matthew inserted the lament to become the dramatic conclusion of the woes¹¹⁴ and the transition to the discussion of the end times is strengthened. But even if Matthew 23:34-39 were a contiguous unit which Matthew adopted *in toto*, it would not exclude the probability that the redactor fully appreciated the significance of the lament as the conclusion to the woe discourse and interpreted it to be the fulfillment of the ironic prophecy which he had inserted in 23:32. In other words, it seems we can have it both ways, the sequence of 23:34-39 may be traditional and still reflect the unique intention of Matthew. In no other gospel are there equivalent words having the same significance or effect as those in 23:32-24:2. But because of our interpretation of the evidence it seems reasonable to conclude that Matthew, not Q, was responsible for the setting of vv. 37-39.

The Interpretation of Matthew 23:37-39

The dramatic effect of these last words to Israel is obvious. Not only do they climax the charges of chap. 23, they climax Jesus' public ministry to Israel and should be understood as illuminating Matthew's conception of God's judgment on a disobedient Israel.¹¹⁵

¹¹² See above, p. 18.

¹¹³ See above, p. 27, and Steck, *Israel*, p. 48.

¹¹⁴ Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, pp. 95-96, designated it as "Jesus' valedictory address to the Jewish nation".

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 154; see W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine*, p. 242.

The meaning of οἶκος. The statement, "your house is left to you, desolate", has in view the judgment of God. The word οἶκος may refer to the city of Jerusalem, since the lament is addressed to Jerusalem;¹¹⁶ or it may refer to the Temple, since it is spoken in the Temple precincts (21:23 and 24:1) and its destruction is predicted in 24:2;¹¹⁷ or it may refer to the entire nation of

¹¹⁶ So Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 191; McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 352; Plummer, *Matthew*, p. 325; Meyer, *Der Prophet*, p. 51; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 86; Bauer, *Lexicon*, p. 563; Steck, *Israel*, p. 228; and Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 174. Cf. Jer. 22:1-8, 12:7; En. 89:50-51, 56, 67, where Jerusalem is the house and the Temple is the tower; and T. Lev. 10:4-5.

¹¹⁷ So Manson, *Sayings*, p. 127; Dodd, *Parables*, pp. 44-45; Haenchen, "*Matthäus 23*", p. 57; Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 181; Davies, *Setting*, p. 298; H. Van der Kwaak, "Die Klage über Jerusalem (Matth. XXIII 37-39)", *NovT*, VIII:160, 1966; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, p. 497; and Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p. 755. Allen, *Matthew*, pp. 251-252; and Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 149, thought it applied to both the city and the Temple.

"The house" is a common expression in the Old Testament referring to the Temple (eg.: I Kgs. 9:1-9 and II Chron. 7:19-22 are striking parallels to Mt. 23:38). See also Jer. 7:10-14, and 26:4-6:

⁴You shall say to them, Thus says the Lord: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law which I have set before you, ⁵and to heed the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not heeded, ⁶then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth. (RSV)

Cf. also II Apoc. Bar. 8:2 and Jub. 49:19.

Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I:943-944, asserted that "house" with the meaning Temple can never have a plural suffix pronoun but only occurs with the singular since "the house" belongs preeminently to God alone. However, Isa. 64:10-11 undermines this claim:

¹⁰Thy holy cities have become a wilderness, Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation ¹¹Our holy and beautiful house where our fathers praised thee, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins. (RSV)

Cf. also, 4Q 179 1, 1.5 and 1.6.

When the house, meaning the Temple, is abandoned by God, who alone gives it significance (cf. Mt. 12:14, "the house of God"), that is precisely the moment when it changes from "My house" to "your house". Irony pervades chap. 23 and Manson (p. 127) contended that the ὑμῶν is indeed ironical. If that is the case, then Matthew probably understood "your house" much as he understood "your synagogues". The use of the pronoun in this context places a significant distance between Matthew's church and the cherished institutions of traditional Judaism.

In support of his argument that Matthew understood "house" to mean the city of Jerusalem, Steck, *Israel*, p. 31, n. 8, maintained that he deliberately changed the Q reading οἶκος (preserved by Lk. 11:52: μεταξύ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ τοῦ οἴκου) to ναός in 23:35 so that there would be no confusion that "your house" in 23:38 referred to the holy city and not the Temple. However, Hoffmann's view, in *Logienquelle*, p. 165, seems more correct. Matthew changed οἶκος to ναός because "...er betont dadurch starker, dass die Mordtat an heiliger Stätte geschah".

Israel.¹¹⁸ Although most interpreters have opted for one of these alternatives, a sharp distinction between the three need not be made since the city, Temple and the national life of the people were all bound together.¹¹⁹ Consequently, one should not decide that 23:38 refers to the Temple or the city without recognizing that the national

Attention must be paid to Matthew's use of *ναός*. Many claim that there is no real distinction between the meaning of *ἱερόν* and *ναός* in the New Testament (cf. Gottlob Schrenk, "*ἱερός*...", *TDNT*, III:235; and Otto Michel, "*ναός*", *TDNT*, IV:882, against G. Dalman, *Orte und Wege Jesu*, p. 301). But in Matthew, *ἱερόν* clearly refers to the temple precincts in 4:5; 21:12, 14, 15, 23; 24:1 and 26:55. The word *ναός* in 23:16, 17, 21 and 27:51 can only apply to the Temple proper. The use of the word in 26:61 and 27:40 has a different focus but would also apply to the sacred building alone (on 26:61, see Senior, *Passion Narrative*, pp. 169-171). Two passages in the gospel, however, seem to weaken the conclusion that there is a distinction in the meaning of the words in Matthew's usage. In Mt. 12:5, the priests in the *ἱερόν* are said to profane the Sabbath by performing the Temple-service prescribed by Lev. 24:5-8 and Num. 29:9-10 which would have been done in the Temple proper. But this use of *ἱερόν* has probably been determined by the statement in 12:6 ("something greater than the Temple is here"). The other passage is in 27:5 which reads that Judas threw the pieces of silver into the *ναός*, an area where only priests were permitted. It is argued from this that *ναός* must refer generally to the Temple precincts (but see Schlatter, *Matthäus*, p. 768). But this interpretation defuses the impact of 27:5. Matthew was unconcerned whether or not it was possible or impossible for Judas to enter the *ναός*; his intent in the creation of this story was to implicate the priests of God's Temple in the death of Jesus. The use of *ναός* in 27:5 may be a deliberate allusion to its use in 23:35. Once again, the sanctuary was defiled by innocent blood (27:4, 6). As Zechariah was most heinously killed within the sacred precincts of the sanctuary, so the blood money for the betrayal of Jesus has found its way back to the *ναός* almost in fulfillment of the passover requirement that the way of the lamb be offered on "the threshold of the altar" (cf. Jub. 49:20). This interpretation makes the tearing of the veil in 27:51 even more significant for Matthew. If this is Matthew's understanding of *ναός*, his use of the word in 23:35 would not be to distinguish the Temple from the house in 23:38 as Steck believed.

¹¹⁸ Schniewind, *Matthäus*, p. 237; Green, *Matthew*, p. 195. "House of Israel" and variations are, of course, common in the Old Testament (cf. Isa. 5:7); and Matthew has specified that Jesus' mission was to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (10:6, 15:24), while 27:25 may be interpreted to imply that "the house of Israel" is completely abandoned for their admitted guilt. Cf. also Gal. 4:25 where Paul uses "Jerusalem" to mean the people in bondage to the Law.

¹¹⁹ McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 342, admitted that "*οἶκος* is not the temple only, but the city with the temple as its centre, which is virtually the nation". Michel, "*οἶκος*...", *TDNT*, V:125, also saw some indistinction: "At a first glance it might appear that the 'house' ... refers to the temple at Jerusalem, but it is not impossible that in accordance with prophetic and apocalyptic usage (En. 89:50ff.; T. Lev. 10:4-5) the city and people themselves are rushing onward to destruction". Cf. Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 67; David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 316; and Green, *Matthew*, p. 195. Cf. also the observations of Van der Kwaak, "Klage", pp. 162-163. The Epistle of Barnabas 16:14 reflects the view that the Temple, city, and the people of Israel are all bound together and destroyed together.

life of the people of God is also imperiled since the city and the Temple are representations of the common life of the people.

The meaning of ἀφιέναι. The exact meaning of ἀφιέται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν ἔρημος is another question.¹²⁰ It may be a divine passive and

¹²⁰ The external evidence for reading ἔρημος in the text is extensive: $\aleph$ C D K W X Δ Θ Π Σ 0138 f¹ f¹³ 33 565 700 892 1009 1010 1071 1079 1195 1216 1230 1241 1242 1253 1344 1365 1546 1646 2148 2174 Byz Lect ita, aur, b, c, d, e, f, ff¹, g¹, h, l, q, r¹ vg syr^{p,h,pal} cop^{bomss} arm eth geo Irenaeus^{lat}, Clement, Origen, Cyprian, Eusebius, Chrysostom, Basil, Cyril, Cosmos. Those witnesses which omit the reading are: B L J¹⁸⁴ it^{if2} syr^s cop^{sa,bomss} Irenaeus^{lat}, Origen, Cyril. The oldest manuscript fragment of Matthew, p⁷⁷, from the second century, also seems to have read ἔρημος, according to the editor's reconstruction of the text (cf. P.Oxy. 2683). The word is omitted in Lk. 13:35 by p^{45vid.75} $\aleph$ A B K L R S V W Γ Δ Π f¹ it vg syr^s cop^{sa,bomss} and included in most of Byzantine texts: DEGHM U X Θ f¹³ 33 syr^p cop^{bomss} Irenaeus, Origen and Eusebius.

The external evidence, which is both geographically widespread and early, argues for ἔρημος as the reading of the original text of Matthew; while the witnesses for Luke indicate that it probably was not in the original text of 13:35. Many, however, consider ἔρημος to be a scribal gloss in Mt. 23:38: Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 191; Plummer, *Matthew*, p. 325; Robinson, *Matthew*, p. 194; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 68, n. 72; Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 89; Steck, *Israel*, p. 50, n. 5; Gaechter, *Matthäus*, p. 755; Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 172; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 137; and Schulz, *Q*, p. 346.

On internal grounds it has been argued that ἔρημος was added by later scribes: 1) in order to conform the text to Jer. 22:5 or to suggest this passage as the background, or 2) in order to explain the meaning of "is being left to you". Against this first argument is the text in Jer. 22:5 itself which reads εἰς ἐρήμωσιν ἔσται ὁ οἶκος οὗτος, not ἔρημος. The word ἔρημος is a common image in the Old Testament to describe the desolation of Jerusalem and the land when God's judgment descends upon Israel (cf. Isa. 1:7; 5:9; 6:11; 62:4; 64:10; Jer. 4:26-27; 7:34; 9:12; 12:10; 22:6; 27(50):12; 40(33):10, 12; 41(34):22; 51(44):2; Ezek. 5:14; 6:14; 33:28-29; Dan. 9:17. The word ἐρήμωσις is found in Lev. 26:31, 34-35; II Chron. 30:7; Jer. 4:7; 7:34; 32(25):18; 51(44):6, 22; Dan. 8:13; 11:31; 12:11). Therefore, it is quite possible that Matthew, not a later scribe, inserted the word himself in order to suggest this Old Testament imagery and to clarify the meaning of "is being left to you" from this perspective. There is nothing which rules this out. Plummer, *Matthew*, p. 325, claimed that the insertion weakens the sad irony of the *dative incommodi*. While this may be true, this may not have been the redactor's opinion. The evangelist could have weakened "the sad irony" as easily as a later copyist; in fact, Matthew shows a propensity to embroider texts with particulars that allude to the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. 21:35, 41; 22:6-7); and his slight alterations in this last section of chap. 23 manifest that he was intent on shaping the text to convey a meaning which emphasized judgment. It tells against the second argument that if the scribes were concerned to amplify the meaning of "is being left to you" with the addition of ἔρημος, they did not also alter the Lucan text in a consistent fashion. Some manuscripts which read ἔρημος in Mt. 23:38 do not read it in Lk. 13:35.

From another perspective, a case can be made for the possibility that scribes would have been tempted to delete ἔρημος from Matthew. After ἀφιέται, ἔρημος may have seemed as superfluous to a scribe as it did to Plummer. It is also not particularly good Greek. A motivation to assimilate Matthew with Luke may have contributed

indicates the departure of the *Shekinah* from the Temple.¹²¹ On the other hand, it may be an indirect reference to Jesus himself—the

to the deletion of the word. Evidence is clear that there was some tendency to add the word to the Lucan text in order to assimilate it with Matthew, because no manuscript that does not read ἔρημος in Mt. 23:38 reads it in Lk. 13:35. The desire to assimilate could lead to deletions as well as insertions. Therefore, the internal evidence does not outweigh the external evidence for reading ἔρημος in Mt. 23:38.

The observations of C. F. Burney in *The Poetry of Our Lord*, p. 146, n. 1, may also be added to the discussion. He concluded that ἔρημος was essential to the *kina* rhythm he detected in the lament; but Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 27, n. 4, considered his analysis to be problematical. We may also cite an extraneous text, II Esd. 1:33, which parallels Mt. 23:38: "Thus says the Lord Almighty: 'your house is desolate'". Cf. also T. Lev. 15:1, 15:3-4. This Christian addition may have been influenced by Mt. 23, or by the Old Testament, or it may have influenced later scribes copying Matthew; but it seems most likely that it represents the influence of the Old Testament imagery which would come to mind to any author reflecting on the destruction of Jerusalem.

Our evaluation of the textual evidence points to ἔρημος as a Matthean addition to the lament. Without this word, Mt. 23:38 (Lk. 13:35) implies that your house is "abandoned to the consequences of your misdeeds" (Plummer, p. 322), or, "is left to its own devices" (R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 222). The addition of the word changes the thought of v. 38 altogether so that the destruction of the city and the Temple by the Romans comes into view (cf. McNeile, *Matthew*, p. 242 and Harnack, *Sayings*, p. 30). This is how Hummel believes the entire passage, 23:37-24:3, should be viewed (*Auseinandersetzung*, pp. 87-89); but he makes the strange assertion: "Die Textzeugen, die in 23, 38 ἔρημος hinzugefugt haben, haben Matthäus sachlich richtig interpretiert" (p. 89). Why could this not be attributed to Matthew? It seems that it should be.

Not only does ἔρημος evoke memories of the devastation wrought by the Roman legions on the sacred institutions and life of Israel (cf. 24:15), it also may be an ironical play on words. Matthew began chap. 23 with the incredible assertion that the scribes and Pharisees sat on Moses' throne, but he concludes with the statement that they will return to the wilderness, ἔρημος, which is marked by disobedience ("and you would not") and judgment (cf. Ezek. 20; Heb. 3:8; and Acts 7:41).

¹²¹ So Haenchen, "Matthäus 23", pp. 55-56; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 86; Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, pp. 18-89; Van der Kwaak, "Klage", p. 163; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 113; Steck, *Israel*, pp. 228, 293; and Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 145, n. 582.

We have cautioned against the identification of the *Shekinah* with Wisdom above. If the *Shekinah*'s removal is implied in v. 38, it is unconnected with the ascent of Wisdom. The *Shekinah* was a "buffer word" which was created to describe the omnipresence of God but was particularly applied to his presence in the sanctuary and among his congregation. Urbach, *The Sages*, p. 42, noted that the term occurs only twice in the *Mishnah*, although it is more prevalent in the *Tosefta* and the *halakhic Midrashim*. It was often used in the later literature to stress that God's presence among Israel did not cease with the destruction of the Temple. This might imply that it was a new concept created for apologetic reasons (see the illustration of Eleazar b. Pedat cited by Moore, *Judaism*, I:369). However, Urbach contended that this was not the case because a new and generally unknown designation would have had little effect. He believed the *Shekinah* to be a widely current systematic tradition: "It is more probable that to give emphasis to the Lord's Presence it was actually an epithet expressing the concept in Temple times that it was chosen" (p. 44).

Temple is to be deprived of Jesus' presence.¹²² In light of Matthew's christology, the latter seems to be the best alternative, especially since Jesus climactically exits the Temple in 24:1 never to return

We can also conclude that another feature of the concept of the Lord's Presence was widespread in the first century: when the Presence withdrew from the sanctuary, because of the abominations of the people, its destruction was imminent. Many texts may be cited such as Ezek. 8:6: "...Son of Man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary?" (Cf. En. 89:56, T. Lev. 15:1). II Apoc. Bar. 8:1b-2 reads: "...a voice was heard from the interior of the temple, after the wall had fallen saying: 'Enter, ye enemies, and come ye adversaries; for he who kept the house has forsaken (it)'". Josephus should also be cited. He recounted the many portents which preceded the destruction of the Temple and went unheeded:

...at the feast which is called Pentecost, the priests on entering the inner court of the temple by night, as their custom was in the discharge of their ministrations, reported that they were conscious, first of a commotion and a din, and after that of a voice as of a host, 'We are departing hence' (μεταβαίνομεν ἐντεῦθεν, *Bell.* VI:299-300).

The departure of God's Presence from the Temple resulted in and explained its destruction.

There are certain deeds which were understood to cause the removal of the Presence of God from the sanctuary (cf. Solomon Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, pp. 223-229). Two causes, which are pertinent to the charges raised in Mt. 23, are the corruption of the leaders and the shedding of blood. In Ezek. 11:5-6, the people multiplied the slain in the city which eventually led to the removal of the glory of God (11:22-23). The same theme occurs in II Apoc. Bar. 10:18. The Targum of Isaiah specifically associates the departure of the *Shekinah* with the corruption of the leaders, the shedding of innocent blood, and desolation (cf. 1:75, 4:4-5, 5:6-9, 8:17, 26:21 and 64:6; cf. also 14:23, 29:2, and 32:14). An association of the theme of shed blood and the departure of the *Shekinah*, which is strikingly parallel to Mt. 23:29-38, is found in T. *Yom.* 1:12 (cited by Kosmala, "His Blood", p. 110). Two priests were racing up the ramps of the altar when one pushed the other in order to get there first. In anger, the one who was pushed stabbed the other with the knife drawn for the sacrifice. The father of the smitten priest examined his son and declared that since he was not yet dead the knife was still ritually clean and the sacrifice could continue. The *Tosefta* laconically concluded: "This teaches that the uncleanness of the knife was of greater importance than the shedding of blood". With a reference to Manasseh and his shedding of blood (cf. II Kgs. 21:17), it further concluded: "it is because of the guilt of bloodshed that the *Shekinah* has withdrawn and the sanctuary is polluted". This is precisely the conclusion one gathers from reading Mt. 23:29-38 and 27:4-5; the guilt of bloodshed is the cause of the abandonment in 23:38.

The *Shekinah* was also related to the study of the Law: "if two sit together and words of the Law are spoken between them, the Divine Presence rests between them" (M. *Ab.* 3:2, cf. 3:6). The *Shekinah* abides with those who are strong in the Law (cf. T. *Ps.* 82:1; B. *Ber.* 6a). If it is the Divine Presence that abandons the house in v. 38, then, once again, the statement in 23:2-3 has been undermined. If the *Shekinah* has left, then one can infer that those it has left were not "strong in the Law".

¹²² So Schlatter, *Matthäus*, p. 690; Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 81; and Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 113.

again.¹²³ Matthew understood Jesus as "God with us" (1:23); and the stark contrast between Jesus' presence in the midst of his community (18:20 and 28:20; cf. also 8:23-27) and the Temple, the heartbeat of Jewish religious life, should not escape attention. From Matthew's confessional perspective, the *Shekinah* and Jesus' presence would have been indistinguishable¹²⁴ as can be seen from the close parallel between 23:38-24:3 and Ezekiel 11:23: "The glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (cf. Ezek. 10:18).¹²⁵ It is no coincidence but the result of Matthean redaction that Jesus appears on the Mount of Olives in 24:3 immediately after he had left the Temple and city. Here he delivers his instruction on the last days and the judgment.¹²⁶

Matthew 23:37-38. To recapitulate, Matthew understood these final words of Jesus to be a confirmation of God's abandonment of Israel as a punishment for the murder of the prophets, culminating in the death of Jesus and the persecution of his messengers.¹²⁷ This

¹²³ This interpretation would entail that ἀφίεται has a present reference as opposed to a future meaning, against Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 191; Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 81, n. 208; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 114; Steck, *Israel*, p. 228, n. 4; and Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 140.

¹²⁴ Günther Bornkamm, in "Die Binde—und Lösegewalt in der Kirche des Matthäus", *Geschichte und Glaube*, II:40 (cf. the English version, "The Authority to Bind and Loose in the Church in Matthew's Gospel", *Jesus and Man's Hope*, I:37-50), argued that Mt. 18:19-20 was formulated antithetically to the Jewish conception of the *Shekinah* (cf. M. Ab. 3:2, 6). Cf. also Barth, *Tradition*, p. 135, who stated "...the place of the Torah is taken by the ὄνομα of Jesus; the place of the *Shekinah* by Jesus himself"; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, pp. 40-43; Strecker, *Der Weg*, pp. 212-214; and Hubert Frankemölle, *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi. Studien zur Form und Traditionsgeschichte des "Evangeliums" nach Matthäus*, pp. 79-83.

¹²⁵ A parallel noted by Klaus Baltzer, "The Meaning of the Temple in the Lucan Writings", *HTR*, LVIII:272, 1965.

¹²⁶ Cf. Zech. 14:4.

¹²⁷ It is hard to escape the conclusion that the destruction of Jerusalem was viewed by Matthew and other Christians as a punishment of God because of Israel's unbelief, against Karl H. Rengstorf, "Die Stadt der Mörder", *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche. Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias*, pp. 125-126; and John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, pp. 13-30, particularly, pp. 19-26. Robinson's discussion reveals a presupposition that a redactor writing after A.D. 70 would have altered the sayings of Jesus in light of the events. But it seems that the early Christians did not exult over the fall of Jerusalem and did exercise some constraint by not altering the words of Jesus to fit events. Cf. Hans Joachim Schopes, *Die Tempelzerstörung des Jahres 70 in der Jüdischen Religionsgeschichte*.

In agreement with our opinion are: Kümmel, *Introduction*, p. 119; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 85; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 35; Walker, *Heilsgeschichte*, pp. 56-57; Steck, *Israel*, p. 304; and Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp. 250-259.

is presaged by the previous two chapters. The servants sent by the vineyard owner in the parable were beaten, killed and stoned (21:37-39). This unyielding wickedness resulted in the destruction of the tenants (21:41). The parable of the marriage feast is similar: the invitations went unheeded; the servants who delivered them were killed (a Matthean detail); and the city was also finally destroyed as a result of this iniquity (22:5-7). In each case divine retribution is highlighted, but, as in 23:37-38, the cause for the judgment is made clear—the obstinacy of the people, summarized in the words, “and you would not” (23:37). As Stagg has recognized, their fate was “chosen, not imposed”.¹²⁸

By making 23:37-39 the conclusion of the woe discourse and the prelude to the eschatological discourse in chap. 24, Matthew has underscored the repudiation of the city and Temple in vivid terms which would call to mind the departure of the glory of God in Ezekiel 11. When Jesus leaves the Temple, “God with us” departs with all the disastrous ramifications which that withdrawal entails. By adding the word ἔρημος to v. 38, Matthew highlighted the fact that God’s abandonment of the city and Temple may now be confirmed by the devastation executed by the armies of Rome.

The greeting in Matthew 23:39. Verse 39 is very difficult to interpret because “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” has a joyous content in Psalm 118:26 and when uttered by the crowds at Jesus’ entry to the city (Mt. 21:9); but interpreting it in this manner renders discordant the mood of harsh judgment throughout chap. 23.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Stagg, “Matthew”, p. 215. The emphasis on a malevolent will is foreshadowed in Mt. 21:19 and 22:3. Cf. also 18:30; 23:4; 11:4; 17:12; 16:24-25; 19:17-21; 20:26-27.

¹²⁹ Most interpreters have assumed that Mt. 23:37-39 = Lk. 13:34-35 does not go back to Jesus but is a pre-Christian Wisdom tradition, see n. 91, above. Many have claimed as a result that v. 39 (Lk. 13:35b) must be a later addition to the Wisdom saying because it alludes to the parousia of the son of man. Bultmann, *History*, pp. 115 and 399, defended v. 39 as the original ending of the saying by interpreting it to mean that “Wisdom foretells that she will remain hidden until the coming of the Messiah; for only he can be meant by the one ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου”. He is followed by Suggs, *Wisdom*, p. 70. Steck, for different reasons, also considered the saying to be a unified pre-Christian tradition which did not go back to Jesus, *Israel*, pp. 53-58. On the other hand, Haenchen, “Matthäus 23”, p. 57, argued that v. 39 could not have been originally joined to vv. 37-38 in a Wisdom saying; because as a non-persona, it was inappropriate to think of seeing or not seeing Wisdom again. Moore, *Judaism*, 1:415-416, supports this perception of Wisdom by noting that while Wisdom and Torah were realities and not simply names or concepts, they were never given personal existence. Wilckens, “σοφία”, p. 515, n. 350, added to Haenchen’s argument that it was unlikely that Wisdom would suddenly change into the figure

When compared with the Lucan text, it can be seen that Matthew has made a slight alteration in the wording which provides an important clue for his understanding of what v. 39 means. Luke has οὐ μὴ ἴδητέ με ἕως ἥξει ὅτε εἴπητε,¹³⁰ but Matthew reads οὐ μὴ με ἴδητε ἀπ' ἄρτι ἕως ἄν εἴπητε. The phrase ἀπ' ἄρτι does not occur in the LXX and is peculiar to Matthew's eschatology,¹³¹ so it is surely a Matthean addition.¹³² But why was this phrase inserted?

of the Messiah or come along with the Messiah at the parousia. Consequently, many have reached the conclusion that when this Wisdom lament was interpreted as referring to Jesus by early Christians, v. 39, foretelling Jesus' death and parousia, was added to complete the picture. Cf. Harnack, *Sayings*, pp. 168-170; Michael, "Lament", pp. 109-113; Klostermann, *Matthäus*, pp. 190-191; Meyer, *Prophet*, p. 145, n. 55; Lohse, "Σιδὼν", p. 329; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, pp. 141-142; and Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 437. Cf. also Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, pp. 176-177.

T. F. Glasson, *The Second Advent*, pp. 99-103, assumed that vv. 37-38 were spoken by God, interpreting ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ in Lk. 11:49 to mean "God, in his Wisdom" (cf. Manson, *Sayings*, p. 102). God could hardly be the speaker in v. 39. Therefore, Glasson believed that v. 39 was originally spoken by Jesus at an earlier juncture in his Jerusalem ministry as an intimation that he would not return to the city until the Feast of Passover. A later editor joined the two sayings together to make v. 39 allude to the parousia of Jesus. Cf. John A. T. Robinson, *Jesus and His Coming*, p. 61. This is an entirely arbitrary interpretation but reveals the problem with v. 39 when it is assumed that vv. 37-38 were spoken by a supra-historical being. When one does not presuppose that God or Wisdom is the speaker of vv. 37-38 or that Jesus could not have possibly spoken about his death and return at the judgment, the difficulty is removed.

We would side with Dodd, *Parables*, pp. 44-45, Knox, *Sources*, II:82; Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 81; and Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, pp. 77, 178, that this word goes back to Jesus.

¹³⁰ The Lucan text contains a difficult textual problem. ἕως ἥξει ὅτε εἴπητε appears to be the reading which would best explain the other variants, whether ἄν is present or omitted after ἕως, whether ἥξει is future or aorist subjunctive or omitted, which seems to have been caused by the difficulty of construing ὅτε with the subjunctive εἴπητε. Θ and 1241 add ἀπ' ἄρτι to the text clearly in an attempt to assimilate it to Matthew.

¹³¹ The phrase occurs in two other passages which clearly depict an eschatological situation: Mt. 26:29, "I tell you I shall not drink of this fruit of the vine from now (ἀπ' ἄρτι) until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my father"; and 26:64b, "Again, I tell you from now on (ἀπ' ἄρτι) you shall see the son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven".

¹³² So Klostermann, *Matthäus*, p. 191; Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 81; Heinz Edward Tödt, *The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition*, p. 83; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, pp. 86-87; Hummel, *Auseinanderzersetzung*, p. 141; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 114; Van der Kwaak, "Klage", p. 164; Robinson, *Jesus and His Coming*, p. 61; Steck, *Israel*, pp. 50 and 293; Christ, *Jesus Sophia*, p. 149; Suggs, *Wisdom*, p. 70, n. 22; Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 172; Frankemölle, *Jahwebund*, pp. 355-357; Schulz, *Q*, p. 347; and Senior, *Passion*, p. 178.

*Ἀρτι occurs alone in Mt. 3:15; 9:18; 11:12; and 26:53 and never appears in Mark or Luke.

Apparently he intended to heighten the sayings' predication of a new eschatological situation,¹³³ since he clearly understood this as a reference to the parousia which is explicitly mentioned only four verses later (24:3): "Tell us ... what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?". Mark and Luke (Mk. 13:4; Lk. 21:7) have the disciples inquire as to when "these things", i.e., the destruction of the Temple, will come to pass. Matthew has added the disciples' concern about τὸ σημεῖον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας. Obviously, v. 39 cannot refer to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as it may in its Lucan context; and it is highly unlikely that it refers to the resurrection appearances. In one of the other two passages where the phrase, ἀπ' ἄρτι, recurs Jesus refers to himself as the eschatological Lord and judge (26:64). When the phrase is used in 26:29, the day of the messianic banquet is in view. In light of the parousia discourse which immediately follows 23:39 in chap. 24, then, it is most likely that Matthew has understood ἀπ' ἄρτι as envisioning a new eschatological situation for Israel.¹³⁴

The association recalled by the use of ἀπ' ἄρτι makes it less likely that the acclamation looks forward to a redemptive encounter between Christ and Israel or any implication that Israel will be converted

¹³³ The verb ἐπισυνάγω in 23:37 also has an association with the eschatological hope of the gathering of "the scattered" from the dispersion for the restoration of Israel (cf. Ps. 105 (106):47; 146 (147):2; II Macc. 1:27, 2:18). Cf. Schrage, "συναγωγή...", *TDNT*, VII:841-842. In 23:37 it is asserted that Israel did not will to be gathered, at least by Jesus. When the verb recurs in Mt. 24:31 (ἐπισυνάξουσιν τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς αὐτοῦ) it has a significantly different meaning from its traditional association in Judaism. It is the same Jesus, rejected by Jerusalem, who comes as the son of man to gather the people; but he will gather *his* elect (cf. Mt. 22:14). The elect consist of those who respond to Jesus as Lord and who produce fruits worthy of his kingdom. Israel has tragically been seen in Matthew's gospel to have disqualified itself.

The idea of "seeing" also has a significant eschatological connotation in Matthew's gospel. The fact is that Israel has not "seen" with the eyes of their hearts, 13:13-15 (cf. also Mt. 25:44). At the parousia, "all the tribes of the earth ... shall see (ὄψονται) the son of man coming upon the clouds of heaven with great power and glory", but this will cause them "to mourn" (κώπονται). The repetition of this image in 26:64 does not carry with it the promise of salvation for the high priest but implies, instead, judgment. This is in direct contrast to the disciples who will see the son of man in his kingdom now (16:28, 28:10) and who will worship (28:17).

¹³⁴ The Matthean usage of this phrase indicates that it lays stress upon a critical break with the past and the commencement of a new situation. Cf. Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, pp. 86-87; Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 141; Van der Kwaak, "Klage", p. 164; Walker, *Heilsgeschichte*, p. 70; Suggs, *Wisdom*, p. 70; and Green, *Matthew*, p. 195. Cf. Senior, *Passion*, pp. 85, 179-183.

before the parousia and will greet their savior with joy.¹³⁵ The context makes this a most difficult interpretation. Matthean statements in 8:12, 21:43 and 22:7 also should not be overlooked as part of the context. No other hint occurs in Matthew which would suggest positive expectations for Israel at the parousia. No consideration of a period of time for repentance is to be found in Matthew 24:30-31, neither is there any reference to a conversion of Israel in Matthew 24. The use of the conjunction γάρ is redactional¹³⁶ with the result that it links v. 39 more closely to v. 38 so that it becomes either an explanation of the statement in v. 38 that your house is abandoned and desolate or a proof of that statement.¹³⁷ Even if the pericope originally had a positive meaning, in Matthew this traditional *Heilsruf* is now associated with an unconditional recognition of judgment.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ This would fit the most obvious meaning of the *Heilsruf* (cf. Van der Kwaak, "Klage", p. 165), and it would seem to accord with Paul's view in Rom. 11:25-26 (cf. Hos. 5:5, 14, 16; and M. Sanh. 10:1). This is the view of Plummer, *Matthew*, p. 325; Gustaf Dalman, *Jesus-Joshua: Studies in the Gospels*, p. 137; Schlatter, *Matthäus*, p. 691; George R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Future*, pp. 203-204; Leonhard Goppelt, *Jesus, Paul and Judaism: An Introduction to New Testament Theology*, p. 96; Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, p. 257; Floyd Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 249; and Goulder, *Midrash*, pp. 429-430. Bonnard, *Matthieu*, p. 344, recognizes it as a possibility.

¹³⁶ So Michael, "Lament", pp. 110-111; Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 86, n. 2; Tödt, *Son of Man*, p. 83; Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, pp. 89, 141; Strecker, *Der Weg*, p. 114; Van der Kwaak, "Klage", pp. 163-164; Steck, *Israel*, pp. 50, 293, n. 4; Hoffmann, *Logienquelle*, p. 172; and Schweizer, *Matthew*, p. 445.

Luke appears to read δέ according to p⁷⁵ABDWΘ¹ f¹³ Byz it^{pt} syr^s cop^{bomss}. This apparently troubled scribes who omitted the reading, cf. p⁴⁵⁵* L it syr^c cop^{sa} bomss.

¹³⁷ Van der Kwaak, "Klage", pp. 169-170, translated ἕως ἂν as a condition: "From now on you will see me no longer until you say...". He interpreted v. 39 as a challenge to Israel to be converted; and if they respond, the threatened punishment will be removed. Because of contextual factors this does not seem to be Matthew's understanding of the verse.

¹³⁸ Cf. Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, pp. 68-70, 88-89, 167, who labels it a "trembling greeting". Strecker, *Der Weg*, pp. 114-115, understands it as a recognition that the Messiah has come to judge at the end of the world. Manson, *Sayings*, p. 128, wrote: "The preceding passages suggest that the meaning is: 'The time will come when you will be ready to say to me, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'; but then it will be too late'". Cf. also, J. C. Fenton, *Saint Matthew*, pp. 377-378; Tasker, *Matthew*, pp. 218-219; Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, pp. 153-155; Pesch, "Theologische Aussagen", p. 295; and Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, p. 86. Cf. also the views of Gregory Baum, *Is the New Testament Anti-Semitic? A Re-examination of the New Testament*, pp. 97-99.

It should not be forgotten that another portion of Ps. 118, v. 22, was used by early Christians as proof of the messiahship of Jesus despite his rejection by his own people. Cf. Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations*, pp. 169-174. Matthew has quoted this portion of the Psalm in 21:42-45 and has connected it with the rejection of the Jewish leaders.

It goes against all the evidence in the entire gospel to try and equate 23:39 with Paul's statement in Romans 11:26 that all Israel will be saved. This interpretation also neglects the context of Psalm 118 and how another portion of that Psalm was used by the early church in its apologetic to prove that Jesus was the Messiah and that the Jews had been rejected for their rejection of Jesus. Matthew 21:42-45 manifest that the Evangelist understood the Psalm in this vein.¹³⁹ The conversion of all Israel (according to the flesh) was no longer considered by Matthew to be a possibility. Matthew has carefully portrayed the messiahship of Jesus as being bound up in his exclusive mission to Israel to this point in the gospel, but *from now on* Israel will have to contend with the exalted Lord who now calls his people from every nation (28:19, including Jews) and who will return to judge the world according to its fruits.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, 23:39 can only be correctly construed—in light of the entire gospel of Matthew as well as the immediate context—as stressing that a new phase had begun in God's dealing with Israel. From now on, Israel will know Jesus only as judge (cf. 13:40-43; 16:27-28; 24:30; 25:31-46). The *Heilsruf* can only be viewed as a greeting for the final judge.¹⁴¹

The theme of rejection in Ps. 118:22 reverberates throughout Mt. 23:29-37. This emphasis outweighs any positive interpretation of Ps. 118:26. Rejecting the head corner stone results in the destruction of the stones of the temple (Mt. 24:2).

¹³⁹ Cf. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, pp. 173-174.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel*, p. 88; Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, pp. 141-142, 170; and Van der Kwaak, "Klage", p. 164.

¹⁴¹ It is unimaginable that Matthew would have believed that simply hailing the return of the Lord in the final days would have been sufficient for salvation. Matthew's gospel emphasizes the surprise of the last days and warns that when they arrive it will be too late to respond properly (cf. 24:36-44, 50-51; 25:11-13, 24-30). The cry of "Lord" is inadequate from Matthew's perspective. In 7:21-23, "Many shall say Lord, Lord"; in 25:11-12, the foolish maidens cried "Lord, Lord". In the first instance Jesus says, "I never knew you"; in the second, the doors remained shut (cf. also 25:24-30, 44-66; and 21:30). This cry in 23:39 may be analogous to Phil. 2:10 in its assertion that in the parousia the entire world will recognize Jesus as Lord. For a similar idea, see the submission of the heathen rulers in Enoch 62:5-6, 9-10; 63:1.

Matthew may be reacting to a belief that the final judgment of Israel would be less severe (cf. B. A.Z. 4a: "As a reward for crying unto me, I help them", where "cry" may also mean salvation). Many Jews conceived the coming of the Messiah in terms of their own exaltation (cf. Zech. 8:3ff.) despite the preaching of Amos, who warned that the preeminence of Israel could not be taken for granted. The presence or return of the Lord to the Temple need not mean automatic salvation for Israel. Amos cautioned that the day of battle with Yahweh's victory can be waged against Israel (Amos 5:18-20; 6:1-7; cf. Mal. 3:1). Matthew should be viewed as endorsing the prophetic idea that the Day of Yahweh was to be associated with wailing, alarm, ruin, gloom and wrath. Cf. further, Ladislav Černý, *The Day of Yahweh and Some Relevant Problems*; and Gerhard von Rad, "The Origin of the Day of Yahweh", *JSS*, IV:97-108, 1959.

Matthew understood this last section of chap. 23 (vv. 29 ff.), portraying the perennial persecution of the prophets and now the rejection of God's Last Messenger and his messengers, much the way the Chronicler interpreted a similar phenomenon in II Chronicles 36:15-16:

¹⁵The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place; ¹⁶but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, till the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, till there was no remedy (RSV).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Johannes Munck wrote in his monograph on Romans 9-11 that Israel's obduracy was "the greatest problem faced by primitive Christianity".¹ This statement applies also to Matthew who was in a situation where he must not only account for the quandary of Israel's rejection of its own Messiah but also explain the great catastrophe of the Jewish-Roman war with the accompanying destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. The effect that the fall of Jerusalem had upon Matthew and his consequent view of Israel should not be underestimated in light of the clear indications within the gospel that he interpreted these events as a concrete sign of God's punishment and rejection of Israel.² But because Israel was the people of the covenant, the same question which Paul wrestled with in Romans 9:14, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" had to be answered by Matthew. Had God failed his people? Hummel has argued, in regard to chap. 23, that Matthew collected everything from the tradition and experience of the church which could provide a justification for this divine judgment, which he believed had been executed against Israel.³

Consequently, Hummel maintained that "Matthew 23 is not only polemic but also interpretation of history".⁴ Throughout this study, the assumption that Matthew 23 was polemic (that is, an attack upon contemporary Judaism) has been challenged; but it is agreed that in chap. 23 Matthew addresses the issue of the current status

¹ Johannes Munck, *Christ and Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9-11*, p. 20. Cf. Peter Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church*, pp. 195-206.

² Cf. 22:7 and 23:37-9. W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 298, saw in 22:7 a clear allusion to the events of A.D. 70, but cf. Floyd Filson, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 233.

³ Reinhardt Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium*, pp. 87-89. He wrote: "Der Hintergrund von Mt. 23 ist die Katastrophe des Jahres 70". Cf. Douglas R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 155; and Lloyd Gaston, *No Stone on Another: Studies in the Significance of the Fall of Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 483-487.

⁴ Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 89. Cf. Lloyd Gaston, "The Messiah of Israel as Teacher of the Gentiles", *Int*, XXIX:31-33, 1975.

of Israel as God's covenant people by outlining the persistent contumacy of this nation, which has finally consummated in God's inexorable judgment. The impact upon Matthew of the crucifixion of Jesus by the Jews and the continued persecution of God's final messengers, the Christian missionaries, again, should not be underestimated, since it would have been perceived as a crime of the greatest magnitude. These facts served to foster and to reinforce the belief that God had no further recourse but to turn from Israel to another nation (composed of Gentiles and Jews, believers in Jesus) which would produce the fruits of the kingdom in due season. If Kingsbury is right in his conviction that Matthew has taken pains in the gospel to depict Israel as having been decisively confronted with the news that saves or condemns,⁵ then one can only conclude that since "this generation" of Israel, under the guidance of the bloc of Jewish leaders, has demonstrably rejected this news, it stands condemned by God (cf. Mt. 22:8).

Matthew drew upon a Palestinian tradition, which Steck identified as a uniquely deuteronomistic interpretation of history, that delineated the traditional conception of Israel's guilt as it was particularly manifest in the murder of the prophets and combined this view with the understanding, prevalent in the hellenistic church, that Israel had been finally rejected.⁶ By adding to the murder of the prophets, the murder of the son of God and the subsequent persecution of those who were sent by him after the resurrection, Matthew emphasized in chap. 23 that Israel's ancient state of guilt not only continued unabated but had been multiplied to the hilt. From Matthew's perspective, there was a limit to the longanimity of God as well as a limit to how much guilt might be allowed to accumulate even by God's chosen people; the opportunity for repentance had been finally squandered, and the measure of the sins of Israel had been completed to overflowing. It is insinuated in chap. 23 that the wrath of God had come upon Israel to the uttermost; and it no longer could lay claim to special status as God's people, not because God had failed, but because Israel had failed. The destruction of the Temple confirmed this opinion. Yet God was not without a special

⁵ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew*, Proclamation Commentary, pp. 76-77, 28.

⁶ Odil Hannes Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des Deuteronomischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum*, p. 305. Cf. Sjef van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew*, pp. 70-71.

people in the world; the community of believers in Jesus now stood in the former place of Israel.

This theme that Israel had been superseded in salvation-history is laced throughout the gospel of Matthew.⁷ Matthew has, in his own way, made a clear attempt to explain a similar question raised earlier by Paul (Rom. 11:11), "Why is it that the Gentiles are taking over the kingdom of heaven?" and "Why is Israel who was first now last?"⁸ This was a theological concern not just for Jewish Christians⁹ but for Gentile Christians as well.¹⁰ Matthew's final account of this "mystery" is quite different from Paul's (cf. Rom. 11:26), and it should not be characterized as a product of vulgar anti-Semitism or an anti-Israel attitude. This writer is inclined to believe that Matthew was himself a Jew, but as Sandmel has perceptively noted:

By ancestry the author could have been either a Gentile or a Jew; it makes no difference, for in thought the author is a Christian concerned with Christian problems and determined to find a solution for Christians.¹¹

Chapter 23, therefore, is not Matthew's attack upon Israel but an attempt to provide a solution for the *Christian* problem of Israel's rejection of the Jewish Messiah and the increasing takeover of the kingdom of heaven by Gentiles,¹² in addition to the problem of explaining the recent destruction of the Temple and city of David. Faced with these incontrovertible facts, the conclusion seemed to be self-evident: the sons of the kingdom had been cast out.

⁷ Cf. Mt. 2:3; 8:10-12; 11:16-19; 12:41-42, 43-45; 16:2-4; 21:43; 22:6-10; 23:37-24:2; and 28:15. Cf. also the *Reflexionszitate*, in Mt. 2:15, 17-23, 28; 4:14-16; 12:17-21; 13:35; and 27:9-10.

⁸ Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Anti-Semitism and Matthew 27:25", *TS*, XXVI:670, 1965. Wolfgang Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel. Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums*, pp. 116 and 214, has particularly noted the universalistic Gentile-Christian character of Matthew, on the one hand, while Israel is self-excluded because of its refusal to accept the message of salvation, on the other hand. This had been noted much earlier by Kenneth W. Clark, "The Gentile Bias in Matthew", *JBL*, LXVI:165-172, 1947.

⁹ The label "Jewish Christianity" signifies little that is specific, but Bruce J. Malina, "Jewish Christianity or Christian Judaism: Toward a Hypothetical Definition", *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, VII:46-57, 1976, has best clarified its meaning.

¹⁰ Luke-Acts was concerned with this problem as has been shown from two differing perspectives by Frank Stagg, *The Book of Acts: The Early Struggle for an Unhindered Gospel*; and Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God*.

¹¹ Samuel Sandmel, *The Genius of Paul*, p. 180. Cf. Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, pp. 147-148.

¹² Hare, *Jewish Persecution*, pp. 164-166, has shown that when Matthew wrote, the mission to Israel was considered to have been over and a failure.

Obviously, from chap. 23, the responsibility for Israel's fate was imputed to the false leaders of the Jews. The scribes and Pharisees, among the other Jewish leaders, who comprised a united front against Jesus, had joined the long tradition of the obdurate leaders of Israel throughout history; but "this generation" was particularly guilty. By singling out the scribes and Pharisees for the blame, Matthew was not polemicizing against the integrity of the leadership directing the religious competition down the street—if this were his purpose, chap. 23 would indeed be sub-Christian—but he was summarizing how the divinely ordained shepherds had heinously failed in their watch-care over the flock. It was because of the Jewish leaders that the crowds failed to follow their initial impulse to believe in and commit themselves to their Messiah. Matthew recalled and spliced together earlier traditions of Jesus' encounters with these contentious leaders in order to form the montage we have in chap. 23. This served to illustrate how the Jewish leaders, here represented by the scribes and Pharisees, had failed in vital matters, most notably in their interpretation of the Law, so that they stood in direct opposition to God's will and ultimately shut men (the lost sheep of the house of Israel) out of the kingdom of heaven. The fate of the entire nation was in the hands of these false leaders. The woes are, therefore, not essentially polemically motivated, but they outline the grounds for the unconditional judgment that is specified in 23:29-39.¹³ This may explain, in part, the virulence of chap. 23, because the judgment had, from Matthew's perspective, already occurred; and it was hastened by those who were privileged to possess the key to the kingdom. As a result of their defalcation of this awesome responsibility, "their" Temple now stands deserted, and from now on Israel, the nation, will no longer know Jesus as Messiah but only as the final judge. This does not exclude, however, individual Jews from the kingdom,¹⁴

¹³ Gaston, "The Messiah of Israel", p. 31. Cf. Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 87.

¹⁴ We would, therefore, agree with the conclusions of David R. A. Hare and Daniel Harrington in "Make Disciples of All the Gentiles (Matthew 28:19)", *CBQ*, XXXVII: 359-369, 1975. They have argued that for Matthew the ἐθνὴ and Israel, the nation, are two distinct entities in salvation history. Their position is:

Individuals of Jewish heritage (such as Matthew himself) will be accepted into the church, but in Matthew's overall view of salvation history the kingdom of God has been taken away from Israel and given to a nation (*ethnos*) producing the fruits of it (Mt. 21:43), i.e., the church. As an entity in salvation history or as a "religious institution" Israel had been replaced by the church (p. 359).

only those who do not believe in Jesus and keep *his* commandments. Matthew's soteriology is quite exclusivistic on this point.

However, as Schweizer has correctly recognized, Matthew does not simply describe the rejection of Israel with a gloating detachment. Matthew has perceived that the events of the Jewish-Roman war can also speak to the Christian community.¹⁵ The Church itself is a mixture of weeds and wheat, good and rotten fish, good and evil wedding guests, faithful and evil servants; and it has its share of false prophets and hypocrites. It has been shown in this study that Matthew's interest in warning his own church by negative example continually crops up in the text; and he is particularly interested in warning those who have inherited the scribal mantle, the Christian doctors of theology, the teachers and leaders of the "little ones". This interest becomes evident in chap. 23 in vv. 8-12, because these verses, which are addressed to the church, would be quite incongruous if Matthew were solely concerned with polemic. Schweizer hit the mark when he maintained that the attack contained in chap. 23 is upon home and that any other interpretation turns this discourse into an vilification of others.¹⁶ In chap. 23, Matthew, with prophetic insight,

Similar conclusions were reached by Rolf Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte in ersten Evangelium*, pp. 111-113; and Hubert Frankemölle, *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi*, pp. 247-256, 257-262. Hare and Harrington have concluded that the Gospel reflects the time when a definitive split between Israel and the church has occurred because Matthew's universalism in 28:19 is a "universalism without Israel". Matthew does not envision the conversion of Israel (p. 363).

John P. Meier, "Nations or Gentiles in Matthew 28:19?" *CBQ*, XXXIX:94-102, 1977, has challenged Hare and Harrington's analysis of ἔθνη in Matthew's gospel and has argued that 28:19 should not be limited to the Gentiles. He agreed that "Israel, the unique chosen people of God, is indeed an entity of the past for Matt; it had its hour of critical choice, and failed to choose rightly" (p. 102); but he contended that even though Israel no longer enjoys its former privileged status, it remained a present concern for Matthew's church and should be included as part of the mission mandate in 28:19 ("to the nations").

Our own analysis of the texts containing ἔθνη coincides with the conclusions of Hare and Harrington. Regardless of the meaning of Mt. 28:19, most would agree that Israel had lost its former status as God's chosen people as far as Matthew was concerned; and we have contended that Israel represented a present concern for Matthew only insofar as he was intent on explaining the why's and wherefore's of Israel's lost status: "What had happened that caused God to reject his people?". "What may we learn from this?"

¹⁵ Eduard Schweizer, "Matthäus 21-25", *Orientierung an Jesus. Zur Theologie der Synoptiker. Für Josef Schmid*, p. 370. Cf. van Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, pp. 168-169.

¹⁶ Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, pp. 445-446. One cannot but regret that this is precisely how chap. 23 has been interpreted and utilized by later Christians.

warns the scribes disciplined to the kingdom that they had better not be found false stewards like the scribes and Pharisees; for if God did not spare Israel, he will just as surely not spare an unfaithful church. Matthew 23 has a pedagogical function.

Consequently, the intention of Matthew in his composition of chap. 23 is considered to be two-pronged: he attempted to elucidate the problem of the rejection of Jesus by the Jews and God's rejection of Israel in the catastrophic war with Rome in order to clarify that Israel no longer had special status with God but had been replaced by a nation which is to produce the fruits of the kingdom in due season. He also intended it to be a warning to the church not to go the way of "this generation" of Israel, for what had happened to them may also happen to "you". Therefore, the Christian is to see himself potentially mirrored in the scribe and Pharisee as a type and to recognize that the same judgment which befell the leaders of Israel awaits the unfaithful leaders of Christ's community. In this matter, Matthew would probably wish to say to Christian leaders, who embody everything which is condemned in this chapter all too much and who live out everything which is commended in this chapter all too little, "Do you not see all these things?"

APPENDIX A

M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection*, p. 429, made the comment that in the whole of chapter 23 there are 646 words, 180 of which are characteristic of Matthew. The following is a list of words that occur in chap. 23 which are considered characteristic, according to the criteria of J. C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, along with their frequency from R. Morgenthaller, *Statistik des neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes*.

	Number of Occurrences in			Occurrence in Mt. 23
	Mt.	Mk.	Lk.	
<i>Matthean Words</i>				
ἀδελφός	14	0	5	v. 8
ἀνομία	4	0	0	v. 28
ἀπὸ ... ἕως	8	1	1	vv. 35, 39
ἄρτι	7	0	0	v. 39
βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν	32	0	0	v. 13
γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι	10	0	3	vv. 2, 13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29
διὰ τοῦτο	11	2	4	v. 34
διώκω	6	0	3 (Acts 9)	v. 34
θυσιαστήριον	6	0	2	vv. 19, 20, 35
κρίσις	12	0	4	vv. 33, 34
μωρός	6	0	0	v. 17
ὁμνύω	13	2	1	vv. 16, 18, 20, 21, 22
ὅπως	17	1	7	v. 35
ὅσος ἐάν	6	2	1	v. 3
οἱ ὄχλοι	33	2	15	v. 1
πατήρ ὁ οὐράνιος	7	0	0	v. 9
πληρῶ	32	1	2	v. 32
πρὸς τὸ + inf.	5	1	1	v. 5
τάφος	6	1	1	vv. 27, 29
τηρέω	6	1	0	v. 3
τότε	90	6	14	v. 1
τυφλός (metaphorical)	6	0	0	vv. 16, 17, 19, 24
ὑποκριτής	13	1	3	vv. 13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29
φαίνομαι	13	1	2	v. 28
φονεύω	5	1	1	vv. 31, 35
χρυσός	5	0	0	v. 17

Number of Occurrences in Occurrence in Mt. 23
Mt. Mk. Lk.

Semi-Matthean Words

αἷμα = life taken	10	1	5	vv. 30, 35 (2)
γεέννα	7	3	1	vv. 15, 33
γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν	3	0	1	v. 33
δίκαιος	17	2	11	vv. 28, 29, 35 (2)
ἐμπροσθεν	18	2	10	v. 13
θεάομαι	4	2	3	v. 5
καθαρός	3	0	1	v. 26
κλείω	3	0	1	v. 13
κράσπεδον	3	1	1	v. 5
μαστιγῶ	3	1	1	v. 34
ὁδηγός	3	0	0	vv. 16, 24
οὕτως	32	10	21	v. 28
πάντα ὅσα	8	2	3	v. 3
περιάγω	3	1	0	v. 15
Χριστός	17	7	12	v. 10
φιλέω	5	1	2	v. 6

APPENDIX B

A. The use of "Pharisees" in Matthew in comparison with parallel pericopae in Mark and Luke according to the Aland Synopsis.

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>
3:7 the Pharisees and Sadducees		3:7 the crowds
5:20 the scribes and Pharisees		
7:29 their scribes (some mss. add and the Pharisees)	cf. Mk. 1:22	
9:11 the Pharisees	2:16 the scribes of the Pharisees	5:30 the Pharisees and their scribes
9:14 the Pharisees	2:18 the disciples of the Pharisees	5:33 those of the Pharisees
9:34 the Pharisees	3:22 the scribes	11:14-15 the crowds
12:2 the Pharisees	2:24 the Pharisees	6:2 certain ones of the Pharisees
12:10 they	3:2 they	6:7 the scribes and the Pharisees
12:14 the Pharisees	3:6 the Pharisees with the Herodians	6:11 they
12:24 the Pharisees	3:22 the scribes	11:14-15 the crowds
12:38 certain ones of the scribes and Pharisees	8:11 the Pharisees	11:16 others
15:1 Pharisees and scribes	7:1 the Pharisees and certain ones of the scribes	11:37-38 a Pharisee
	7:3 the Pharisees and all the Jews	
	7:5 the Pharisees and the scribes	
15:12 the Pharisees		
16:1 the Pharisees and Sadducees	8:11 the Pharisees	cf. 11:16
16:6 the Pharisees and Sadducees	8:15 the Pharisees and Herod	12:1 the Pharisees
16:11-12 the Pharisees and Sadducees (2)		
19:3 Pharisees	10:2 Pharisees	
21:45 the chief priests and the Pharisees	12:12 they cf. 11:27 the chief priests and the scribes and elders	20:19 the scribes and the chief priests
22:15 the Pharisees		
22:16 their disciples with the Herodians	12:13 certain ones of the Pharisees and the Herodians	20:19-20 scribes and chief priests
22:34 the Pharisees	12:28 one of the scribes	10:25 a lawyer

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>
22:41 the Pharisees	cf. 12:35 the scribes	cf. 20:41 they
23:2 the scribes and Pharisees	12:36 scribes	20:46 scribes
23:13 scribes and Pharisees		11:52 the lawyers
23:15 scribes and Pharisees		
23:23 scribes and Pharisees		11:42 the Pharisees
23:25 scribes and Pharisees		11:39 the Pharisees
23:26 Pharisee		
23:27 scribes and Pharisees		11:43-44 the Pharisees
23:29 scribes and Pharisees		11:45-47 the lawyers
27:62 the chief priests and the Pharisees		
		5:17 Pharisees and teachers of the law
	2:1-2 many	5:17 the scribes and the Pharisees
9:3 certain ones of the scribes	2:6 certain ones of the scribes	5:21 the scribes and the Pharisees
cf. Mt. 21:31-32		7:30 the Pharisees and the lawyers
cf. Mt. 26:6, Simon, the leper	cf. Mk. 14:3, Simon the leper	7:36 a certain one of the Pharisees (2)
26:8 the disciples	14:4 some	7:37 the Pharisee's home
		7:39 the Pharisee
		11:37-38 a Pharisee (2)
		11:53 the scribes and the Pharisees
		13:31 certain Pharisees
		14:1 a certain one of the rulers of the Pharisees
		14:3 the lawyers and the Pharisees
		15:2 the Pharisees and the scribes
		16:14 the Pharisees
		17:20 the Pharisee
		18:10-11 a Pharisee
cf. Mt. 21:15-16		19:39 certain ones of the Pharisees from the crowd

B. The use of "scribe" in Matthew not included above.

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>
2:4 the chief priests and scribes of the people		
7:29 their scribes	cf. Mk. 1:22 scribes	
8:19 one scribe		9:57 a certain man

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>
9:3 certain ones of the scribes	2:6 certain ones of the scribes	5:21 the scribes and Pharisees
13:52 scribe of the kingdom		
16:21 the elders, chief priests and scribes	8:31 the elders, chief priests and scribes	9:12 the elders, chief priests and scribes
17:10 the scribes	9:11 the scribes	
	9:14 scribes	
20:18 the chief priests and scribes	10:33 the chief priests and the scribes	cf. Lk. 18:31
21:15 the chief priests and scribes		cf. Lk. 19:39
	11:18 the chief priests and the scribes	19:47 the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the community
21:23 the chief priests and the elders of the people	11:27 the chief priests and the scribes and the elders	20:1 the chief priests and the scribes with the elders
21:46 they	12:12 they	20:19 the scribes and the chief priests
		11:49 prophets and apostles
23:34 prophets, wisemen and scribes		
26:3 the chief priests and elders of the people	14:1 the chief priests and the scribes	22:2 the chief priests and the scribes
26:47 chief priests and the elders of the people	14:43 the chief priests and the scribes	
27:1 all the chief priests and the elders of the people	15:1 the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole council	cf. 22:66 the assembly of the elders of the people, chief priests and scribes
		23:1 the whole company of them
		23:10 the chief priests and the scribes

C. The use of "chief priest" not included above.

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>
26:14 the chief priests	14:10 the chief priests	22:4 the chief priests and captains
26:55 the crowds	14:48 them	22:52 the chief priests and captains of the temple and elders
27:3 the chief priests and the elders		
27:12 the chief priests and elders	15:3 the chief priests	cf. Lk. 23:3
cf. 27:18	15:10 the chief priests	
27:20 the chief priests and the elders	15:11 the chief priests	cf. 23:18 they

D. The use of Sadducees not included above.

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>
22:23 Sadducees 22:34 Sadducees	12:18 Sadducees	20:27 some Sadducees

E. The use of lawyer.

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>
22:35 a lawyer	12:28 one of the scribes	10:25 a lawyer 7:30 the Pharisees and the lawyers 14:3 the lawyers and the Pharisees

From a comparison of the references to the Jewish leaders in the Synoptic gospels, some general tendencies can be seen. In the cases where Matthew does not follow Mark verbatim, he tends either to reduce the Jewish leaders to two groups or to combine the one group in Mark with another to form a pair. When Matthew refers to only one party he tends to use "the Pharisees". He alters Mark's "scribes" to "Pharisees" five times; but six times he retains Mark's "scribes" and adds the "elders" or changes "the scribes" to "the elders" four times. Four times Matthew mentions "the scribes" without a parallel. Nine times Matthew combined "the scribes and Pharisees", seven in chapter 23 alone; but none of these changes provide grounds for concluding that the Pharisees are a particular living concern for Matthew, because Luke mentions the Pharisees even more often in his gospel and also combines the scribes and Pharisees (six times without parallel). From all of this, it can only be concluded that Matthew displays a clear tendency to obscure the historical distinctions between the different leaders or parties. The Pharisees can not be isolated as the chief enemies in Matthew except as they are Jewish leaders, who form a united front against Jesus.

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